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## The greatest Victorian?

R. T. Shannon

WALTER BAGEHOT  
The Collected Works  
Edited by Norman St John-Stevens  
Volumes Twelve and Thirteen: Letters. 711pp.  
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Norman St John-Stevens began the immense scholarly enterprise of editing the writings of Walter Bagehot, with the light heart of youth, in 1960. The first set emerged in 1965. Now, with these four volumes of letters and miscellaneous pieces, the laborious task is accomplished. We have conveniently to hand everything that is likely to be identifiably from the pen of the man G. M. Young dubbed "the greatest Victorian" (or, on second thoughts, "if not the greatest, at least the truest"). The text is annotated helpfully yet unobtrusively. There are excellent indexes. The volumes are most handsomely produced. In the final volume there is a comprehensive bibliography. Whether or not Bagehot was indeed the greatest Victorian, he certainly has a literary monument worthy of that status. It is an achievement of which the editor and his publisher, *The Economist* itself, can be proud.

*The Economist* was founded in 1843 by a Roxburghshire Scot, James Wilson, in the free trade interest. Walter Bagehot became Wilson's son-in-law in 1858 and editor of his weekly paper in 1860, at the age of thirty-four. These were the heroic years of Peel's great 1842 budget, Gladstone's tariff manipulations, Corn Law repeal and Gladstone's fulfilment of Peel's policy in the epochal budgets of 1853 and 1860. 1943 was not a time for elaborate centenary celebrations; but as 1960 approached a feeling grew that *The Economist* owed more than merely conventional and cursory journalistic ploy to its most illustrious editor. Geoffrey (later Lord) Crowther ("not the greatest editor of *The Economist*, but the best", from 1938 to 1956) encouraged Alastair Buchan to produce his biography, *The Spare Chancellor*, in 1959. Also in that year appeared an interpretative edition of some of Bagehot's texts by Mr St John-Stevens, whom Crowther then encouraged to undertake a complete scholarly edition. 1977, the centenary of Bagehot's untimely death, would be a kind of target. Something of the order of eight volumes was then projected.

As we see, fifteen volumes, and several extra years, were in fact needed. This is a measure of new materials discovered: nearly twenty substantial articles; hundreds of letters either wholly or in part unpublished. It is a measure of the pressure on the time of an editor who had become a Member of Parliament and a holder of office in two administrations. It is a measure also of editorial assiduity. Volume Fourteen collects fugitive pieces identified stylistically or by other reconnoitre evidences. Volume Fifteen especially is a marvellously rich mine of highly researched Bagehotiana. Though a man careless of memorials and casual with his papers, Bagehot has been tracked down the years most doggedly. There is a fascinating collection of photographs. That there is only one extant likeness of him is as tolerably certain as such things can be. That an obituary of him lurks undetected is most unlikely. That any material circumstance relating to his West Country forebears or his Langport family remains unknown is improbable (there is an elaborate family tree drawn by a Kansas City husband of a collateral descendant). We can be pretty sure that Woodrow Wilson made in fact only one pilgrimage to Langport, in 1895. We know everything there is possible to know about Bagehot's appearance, his conversation, his circle of friends, his homes and houses, his views on the monarchy, and his status-in-law. We are even favoured, as a consequence of the editor's pious enthusiasm, with a fifty-seven-page disquisition on Bagehot's religious views; which, with the best will in the world, one cannot say has much advanced our understanding of Bagehot's great friend R. H. Hutton's epiphany that "while the religious instincts were strong in Bagehot, the religious affections were weak". The letters are highly uneven in distribution and randomly

fragmentary in coverage. There is a mass to (and from), very engagingly, his wife. But the last year of his life, for example, yields only four items totalling about 480 words.

Thus, in all: two literary volumes, two historical, four on politics, three on economics, two for letters and the two miscellanies. And all this for a man who followed his father into a modest Somerset banking concern, who developed an itch for metropolitan journalism, who then at the behest of his father-in-law edited a weekly paper with a circulation of two to three thousand readers for seventeen years, who failed ignominiously in his ambition to become a Liberal Member of Parliament, who published a trio of short and "viewy" hooks, who was a rather hasty writer, sometimes slipshod, often inaccurate, and who died prematurely in his fifty-first year as a consequence of a chill exacerbated by stopping off on a raw March morning to support George Otto Trevelyan's candidacy for the Athenaeum. What is the secret? Wherein lies the greatness? Bagehot himself, having been elected to the Athenaeum under the rule allowing gentlemen "who have attained eminence in Science, Literature, the Arts or for public services" to jump the queue for entry, remarked to his wife: "I wonder in which my eminence is."

The case was, and is, not obvious. There has been no stint of essays in explanation. The eminences of his own time were ready with eulogies. For Gladstone it was a question not only of "the advantage of free and frequent communication with him on all matters of finance and currency" but also of "deeper questions of political philosophy, and of human character". The present editor follows a long critical tradition in his celebration of Bagehot's "profound psychological insights into men and institutions", his "literary aperçus", his "sagacity in financial and economic matters", his "deep concern with moral and religious values", his "sparkling personality and prose". For Young it was saliently the breadth and vigour of Bagehot's mind and "the perfect management of all this energy and all these resources". Buchan stresses "cheerful mental vigour" and the analogy with Tocqueville and the "conquest of his mind over his apprehensions", the "contrast between the conservatism of his instincts and the open-mindedness of his judgements".

This is all very well and no doubt very true. Yet there persists a suspicion that Bagehot's own question about himself remains mysteriously unanswered. It seems to be, centrally, a problem of Bagehot's peculiar affinity with his time. This was not at all a matter of any representative "Liberalism" in the classic age of free trade and laissez-faire. Though he proclaimed himself a worshipper of Cobden and everything he stood for, Bagehot's career was, in fact, a very carefully nurtured affair of judiciously managed family connections and traditional nepotistic patronage. His political affinities, whether as to his practical efforts to engineer a seat in the Commons or the "high-spirited bumpfulness" of his observations upon the character of the second French Republic in its latter days or of his theoretical perceptions in *The English Constitution*, were thoroughly Palmerstonian in character and spirit. He respected Gladstone greatly, but his favourite Chancellor of the Exchequer was Sir George Cornewall Lewis. In an attempt to get closer to the inwardness of Bagehot and his reputation, two things, perhaps, might usefully be attended to. The first is the prematureness of his death. Is it permissible to suggest that, with all due respect, this was lucky for his reputation? A reasonable expectation of life would have seen him, along with Herbert Spencer or Leslie Stephen, into the twentieth century. (His widow died in 1921; his father lived eighty-six years; his father's brother lived eighty-five and his mother eighty-four.) One wonders how cheerfully the mental vigour might have been sustained through the era of the "great depression", of Irish Home Rule and Liberal disunion, of imperial adventure, or how sparkling would have remained the personality and the prose to times of relative economic decline, of general social and cultural distemper. Bagehot's allotted time was the great high plateau of Victorian vigour and Victorian success. His faith in progress, as St John-Stevens points out, was "remarkably confident".

The second thing to attend to, apropos of this, is the terms of G. M. Young's accolade of "the greatest Victorian". This has been quite important in maintaining the buoyancy of Bagehot's stock since its publication in the *Spectator* in 1937. The present editor testifies that it was the "final impetus" which set him on his way into Bagehot studies. Young's criteria were that the candidate should be "typical of a large and important class", that he or she (for George Eliot was among the front runners) should be rich in abilities fostered by the age, and that he or she should be "one who made a difference, and under whose influence or direction we are still living". Certainly Bagehot wanted to make a difference. He was ambitious to be, and he seen to be, a directive



influence, an intellectual instructor, an agent of moral improvement. ("The lower classes are ignorant, but the last generation is better than the preceding ones, our generation more instructed than the last; it is for us to see to the next.") Bagehot's abilities and his typicality, within the terms stipulated, are equally manifest. He had no reason to show other than an "affectionate and humorous interest in all the doings of his time". His time dealt very gently with him; at least, probably, in thwarting his parliamentary ambitions. It is inconceivable that Bagehot could be inspired by any impulse to challenge or be awkward. He had a way of distancing or accommodating himself to circumstances by combining gentle mockery with bland irony. The letters are a rich source of this technique, especially those to his fiancée and wife ("She got used", as St John-Stevens remarks, "to his quirky chaffing"). He deflected religious doubt by employing Newman's absolutism to "liberate" him from "the dark places of his own mind", and (the words are Buchan's) so enable him "to dwell on the imaginative and romantic aspect of worship". Hutton noted that while Bagehot would occasionally read papers to the Metaphysical Society he seldom contributed to debate. In much the same affable manner he could accommodate Darwin within his doctrine of "animated moderation" and covert natural selection deftly to the purposes of Burkean politics and Cobdenite economics. Bagehot found his age unresistant. Young put the same point more positively when he remarked that Bagehot carried his superior intelligence "with such genial and ironic delight, that his influence... encountered no resistance".

Quite. But what if it should happen that, despite all genial and ironic delight (or, more likely, because of the same), his influence did encounter resistance? What if it should be the case that this embodiment of "the most precious element in Victorian civilization, its robust and masculine sanity", found himself in circumstances which imposed intolerable demands upon such resources? In the very year of Bagehot's death occurred the legal collision between Ruskin and Whistler which signalled the beginning of the disintegration of the Victorian cultural synthesis of art's service of morality. True, Ruskin was always a weaker vessel and his sanity never so robust; but his sanity was a portent just the same. Within the following decade Tennyson's anxiety and frustration would explode into the violent hysteria

of "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After", which Gladstone feared would be so subversive of Liberalism's reputation that he felt obliged to respond with an elaborate vindication. Already Herbert Spencer had denounced the age of the 1860s as one of renegadism and betrayal. Ruskin's disciple Morris could see no hope but in a violent socialist destruction of the Victorian order. Matthew Arnold scolded Gladstone with frothing virulence. Lecky looked back to the epoch between the first and second Reform Acts as a lost, golden age, drowned beyond reclamation by the tide of heedless democracy. Leslie Stephen, everyone's choice as successor to Bagehot for robust masculine sanity, watched morosely as the age of Pater and Wilde, of aestheticism, decadence and *fin de siècle*, passed on into the age of Bloomsbury.

How would Bagehot have coped? Arguably, he could have held out as stoutly as Browning, "brutally scornful of all exquisite morbidity". But he lacked Browning's advantage of not being expected to be intangible and moreover of spending most of his time in Italy. Conceivably, he might, like Meredith, have been carried into a polling booth in 1906 to strike one last blow for Liberalism. But that would have been most unlikely. Already, in his own time, Bagehot was beginning to part company with the Liberals who looked to Mill for thought and Gladstone for action. The 1867 Reform Act disturbed him. Along with Fitzjames Stephen, Maine, Dicey, Seely, Arnold and Jowett, he became critical of the new prevalence of "sentimentality" in Liberal politics. On slavery in America his views were "pragmatic". He had been willing enough, on strictly legal grounds, to follow Mill in prosecuting Governor Eyre of Jamaica; but he could not stomach the moral crusade of 1876 over the Bulgarian atrocities. One of the leading crusaders, the historian Freeman, remarked that he had known Bagehot for many years: "a clear-headed fellow, but I could not get him to give me a penny for the Refugees". It is the "but" that would have interested Bagehot. And there is no question but that Bagehot would have parted company with Gladstone over Home Rule for Ireland. St John-Stevens quotes Hutton's comment that, for Bagehot, the Irish were included in that category "masses of unknown men" for whom he felt little. "I do not think", continues Hutton, "he had at any time any keen sympathy with the multitude... And that he ever felt what he since then termed 'the enthusiasm of humanity', the sympathy with 'the tolling millions of men sunk in labour and pain', he himself would strenuously have denied. Such sympathy, even when men really desire to feel it, is, indeed, very much oftener coveted than actually felt by men as a living motive; and I am not quite sure that Bagehot would have even wished to feel it."

Hutton, a man who himself pre-eminently felt such emotions and sympathies (very conspicuously as editor of the *Spectator* at the time of the Bulgarian case), knew his Bagehot well. Yet Hutton in the end stopped short at Home Rule. That Bagehot's confidence in his time would have cracked much earlier is, at the least, a perfectly plausible conjecture. He was cooler and clearer-minded than most of those erstwhile bopful Liberals of the 1860s who ended up disillusioned voting Unionist in 1886 and thanking their lucky stars for Lord Salisbury in 1895. Which is only to say that he probably would have left earlier than most of them. Max Beerbohm had a marvellous vision of the middle-aged Byron, having survived Missolonghi, occupying himself with cantankerously Tory letters to *The Times* in defence of the Corn Laws. One need not, in the case of Bagehot, abandon oneself so irresponsibly to such taking whimsy by inventing fantasies of the venerable author of *Physics and Politics* endorsing Joseph Chamberlain's Tariff Reform campaign or of the sage of *The English Constitution* angrily defending the House of Lords against Mr Asquith. Yet one equally has an obligation to estimate the likely contrast between the version of him presented by Young, vivaciously redolent in these volumes, and a version readily enough imaginable without undue affront to intellectual protocol. No doubt such a Bagehot would still be celebratable. No doubt there would have been sets of the published works in plain memorium. But would men have deemed him *Victorianum maxime*?



# With what right, and to what end?

As publications on terrorism proliferate, two reviewers assess the subject and its literature from different viewpoints.

## Charles Townshend

**BENJAMIN NETANYAHU** (Editor)  
Terrorism: How the West can win  
254pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £14.95.  
0297 790250

**KENT LAYNE OOTS**  
A Political Organization Approach to  
Transnational Terrorism  
175pp. Greenwood, distributed by Eurospan.  
£29.95.  
0313 251053

**RICHAUD CLUTTERBUCK** (Editor)  
The Future of Political Violence: Destabilization,  
disorder and terrorism  
206pp. Macmillan. £25 (paperback, £7.95).  
0133 37990X

**JAMES ADAMS**  
The Financing of Terror  
293pp. New English Library. £12.95.  
0450 080861

**CHRISTOPHER DOBSON and RONALD PAYNE**  
War Without End: The terrorists: An  
intelligence dossier  
279pp. Harrow. £9.95.  
0245 543546

**MARY KALIHO and PAUL ANDERSON** (Editors)  
Mind Dogs: The US raids on Libya  
172pp. Pluto Press, in association with  
European Nuclear Disarmament. £3.50.  
0745301967

The terrorist assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, resulted in the First World War. The precipitant was Austria's determination to punish the State which harboured the terrorists. The Austrian demand to exercise police powers within Serbia was a clear breach of Serbian sovereignty, and was the only part of the Austrian ultimatum to be rejected. The question whether Austria had the right, moral or legal, to retaliate against Serbia remains relevant today. The actual outcome of its retaliation should also be borne in mind by those involved in framing anti-terrorist policies in the future. For whether or not one State has the right to override the sovereignty of another, the further question remains: can such interference have its intended effect?

These questions have been revitalized in the wake of the US air bombardment of Tripoli and Benghazi on April 15. The books under review here provide radically different answers to them. The encouraging message of Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, is that "the West can win". He roundly asserts that sovereignty is not absolute: States do not have the right to commit crimes against humanity within their borders, and outsiders have every right to intervene to stop them. His view, with which most of his contributors appear to concur, is that terrorism is a specifically anti-Western phenomenon. It is a manifestation of totalitarianism, bent on the overthrow of democracy. "The West" is a collection of democratic polities, whose openness and respect for civil liberty renders them peculiarly vulnerable to what one contributor (Paul Johnson), reverting to the medical metaphors favoured by old conservatism, calls the "cancer of terrorism". Terrorism is inherently anti-democratic, and directly or indirectly a tool of Soviet communism. Whatever its other merits, this view is obviously useful to Israel, since it elides the pre-1947 history of Palestine (in which the Arabs can plausibly figure as the exponents of democratic self-determination, and the Zionists appear as its opponents - and terrorists as well), together with the issue of Palestinian rights. Do they have a right to their homeland? If they ever did, they have flown it away. Present-day Israel is demonstrably a democratic polity, the Palestine Liberation Organization is not. By resorting to terrorism, the PLO has revealed itself as evil - a word which recurs throughout Ambassador Netanyahu's collection. Against evil, any means are justifiable.

A pretty certain litmus test of writers on terrorism is their attitude to Claire Sterling's book *The Terror Network*. This has been limited on the political right as conclusive proof of a Soviet-run international terrorist conspiracy. By others, including at least one of the

majority of academic reviewers, it has been seen as a disturbing example of a tendency to base improbable constructs on unreliable evidence, of the sort that fills all too many official intelligence files. The fact that Claire Sterling is herself a contributor to *How the West can win* indicates the general position of the volume. Yet several of its contributors present views which complicate the editor's simple black-and-white vision of the good West versus the bad rest. One wonders what he made of Alain Besançon's chilling observation that "if it is hard to fight terrorism on the practical plane, it is harder still to eradicate a deeply rooted nihilism in our culture that gives rise to terrorism". (Note well, *our* culture, that of "the West" itself.) The fact that Besançon's contribution is a historical account of nineteenth-century Russian terrorism may have seemed to the editor to blunt its relevance. History may also have seemed to insulate the brilliant vignettes on Islamic political violence by Bernard Lewis and Elie Kedourie.

But history here cannot be safely ignored. It reveals the shallowness of the Soviet-conspiracy thesis, and the danger of self-deception lurking in the good/evil dichotomy. Above all, history shows that "terrorism" is not monolithic. An intellectual combat is now in progress between those who, for whatever reason, would detach "terrorism" from specific cultural referents and treat it as an autonomous manifestation of violence, and those who hold that terrorist acts are comprehensible only within their specific circumstances. Ambassador Netanyahu and his contributors denounce the moral relativism of the notorious tag "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter". They would have us believe that "there are no good terrorists". If you define terrorism as evil, no doubt this follows. But specific acts are harder to classify, and there are genuinely ambiguous cases. To reverse Jean Kirkpatrick's self-confidence, "We know better": we know that, in politics, treason does sometimes prosper, and so does terrorism; only when they do, their names get changed.

The impossibility of establishing the autonomy of terrorism is revealed in the failure to establish a definition of the term that is either coherent or widely agreed. Each of the books under review uses a different definition, or no definition at all - merely a conventional lumping of acts that are habitually labelled "terrorist". The cynical view that "terrorism" describes violence of which the powers-that-be disapprove contains a germ of truth. Most definitions of terrorism are also definitions of war (such as "the use of violence for political ends"), the only distinction being that international law permits warlike acts by States but not by other organizations. This is obviously a good working arrangement from the viewpoint of governments, but it manifestly fails to recognize the reality of political conflict within States. Hence the much-agonized Geneva Additional Protocols of 1977.

The complexity of the definitional problem is well displayed in Kent Layne Oots's clinically detached *A Political Organization Approach to Transnational Terrorism*. His opening survey addresses the concept of terrorism itself, as well as its fashionable qualifying adjectives "transnational" and "international". This introduction should be useful even to those who find his subsequent analysis less illuminating. This is a political scientist writing for political scientists, and the opacity of his style will limit his readership. Nor can it be pretended that his statistical analysis produces very striking conclusions; what it does is to show the formidable difficulty of any conceptual analysis. Oots bases his working of the ITERATE data collection on a division of terrorist acts into "simple", "moderately difficult", and "difficult", the classification being derived from the "amount of planning and resources which each type of action would normally entail". It is easy enough to see the weakness of this criterion, and Oots candidly admits that since there are no available measures on which the determination can be made, "one is forced to rely on appearances and introspection" (by which he means, presumably, intuition). For instance, he places all bombings in the first category; yet it is seriously misleading to classify actions such as the milk-burn bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem by the Irgun, or the truck bombing by Islamic Jihad in Beirut on Octo-

ber 23, 1983, as "simple".

If Oots's final conclusions are not very dramatic, that is all to the good, and gives greater weight to his unequivocal demolition of the "international terrorist conspiracy" idea. Terrorist organizations, he shows, do not cooperate as often or as closely as is frequently supposed. The precipitants of terrorist action are multifarious - ideological, economic, psychological.

It follows that the objectives of those labelled terrorists, and hence their strategies, are also varied. This is perhaps the most necessary modification to the monolithic view of terrorism. It is simply absurd to contend that all terrorism is aimed at the overthrow of Western democracy, and the most sophisticated "terrorism experts" no longer do so. A good clutch of them display their wares in *The Future of Political Violence*, a collection of studies under the auspices of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, and for all the schematic crudity of Richard Clutterbuck's approach, it is noticeable that the tight constraints of "overthrow", and even the looser garment of "subversion", have been cast off in favour of something called "destabilization". For it is generally conceded that purely terrorist groups are too weak to overthrow States. So what can they hope to achieve? What have States to fear from them? Not the assassination of ministers or police chiefs, which has often alarmed governments but never paralysed them. The answer is destabilization, a term whose appeal is doubtless enhanced by its quasi-technical sound and, not least, its imprecision. Nobody who talks of destabilization is foolish enough to venture a definition of stability, or to propose a precise means of measuring its disappearance. We are told that it has something to do with economic conditions, and is related in some way to the honesty and efficiency of the government, though not necessarily to the extent of political participation.

Does this vagueness matter? It certainly does if the danger of destabilization is to be used as the justification for special legal or administrative steps to defend "stability". James Adams confidently asserts that "destabilization can ultimately topple governments", but sees no need to explain the mechanics of such a process. What we seem to come up against here is the common belief that liberal-democratic political systems are exceptionally vulnerable to destabilization, even though, as General Clutterbuck simultaneously admits, they are "the most resilient in the long term". So why all the alarm? At its root lies an image of extreme social breakdown, the total collapse of normal social interaction, in effect the cessation of "society" in any functional sense. Many people still believe that this was how the Weimar republic fell to Nazism: terrified and disoriented people lost faith in the government and turned to the terrorists themselves for salvation. In fact, hard evidence of such a process in Germany (before as distinct from after 1933) is surprisingly rare. A more definite version of this image can be projected from the FLN campaign in Algeria, but again it must be doubtful whether the peculiarities of Algerian society after a century of French rule offer any useful parallel for long-established "open" Western societies.

A realistic sense that terrorism may well always be with us, without ever reaching critical proportions, informs the RUSI study. This harmonizes with the existence of multi-million pound insurance and advisory concerns like Control Risks Ltd, to which Clutterbuck and half his contributors belong. The *modus operandi* of Control Risks, in which professional negotiators take over from the State the management of kidnappings or other terrorist incidents, is angrily denounced by James Adams in *The Financing of Terror*. Far him, the false priority of protecting victims has ensured that huge sums of money swell the coffers of terrorist organizations, and the existence of kidnapping insurance will increase the risk of such occurrences. As if, in reply, Clutterbuck urbanely likens kidnapping to fire insurance, protesting that the latter cannot be accused of increasing the risk of fires.

In certain cases, however, it obviously can. Deliberate arson to collect insurance money is not unknown, and likewise collective kidnapping can hardly be dismissed as improbable. But neither is likely to be a major problem

What Adams seems to dislike most about Control Risks is the easy professional world it has created, in which terrorists figure as fellow professionals. The symbiosis could be portrayed as a form of stability or containment. But for Adams this is not good enough. He believes that terrorism can be defeated through financial strangulation. His often fascinating investigation shows indisputably how many terrorist groups have become financially self-sufficient, a few even wealthy. But he overdrains the wealth of the IRA: as one military intelligence officer graphically put it, most of the republican funds are "piled against the walls of West Belfast". His general picture of an "IRA mafia" is not one of destabilization - rather the opposite. And he labours his case that the governments involved in the fight against terrorism have failed to understand the evolution of such organizations.

Even if it is sensationalized, Adams's book has a message, in contrast to *War Without End*, written by Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne. The team that gave us *The Carlos Complex and Terror! The West fights back*, here produced another rather aimless collection of information, albeit one whose very completeness undermines the simplistic view of terrorism (for example, they offer a short account of the origins of Shi'a militancy in the seventh century which opens out a historical dimension lacking in so many current discussions of terrorism). Unfortunately the impact of what Adams wants to say is lost in a sort of aversive "insight" inquiry, where fragments of conclusions lie hidden amid a pile of factual material, rather than emerging coherently from a structured argument. Thus, for instance, we are abruptly told at a late stage, without any other explanation, that it is "an absolute rule of terrorism that, to survive, a terrorist group must have the sanctuary of a friendly country bordering the country in which the struggle is taking place". If this is so, then many apparently surviving terrorist groups must be illusion. And why does journalism naively insist on describing Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) as "the British government's tap-secret spy centre", or the Palestinian National Front (PNF) officers in Damascus as "remnants of a scene from the film *Casablanca*"?

The picture that Adams presents of his two main subjects, the PLO and the IRA, is flawed by his limited historical perspective. In the case of the PLO, he thinks that history must be taken back as far as 1948, but no further. Maybe there is some wisdom in this, since in taking Irish history back to 1534 he produces a version which will probably mystify readers on both sides of the border. All this is a pity because it prevents him from buttressing, as he could easily have done, his essentially sound critique of Israeli and American anti-terrorist operations. For he has a robust good sense about the more fanciful versions of the international conspiracy theory. Like Oots, he can see that terrorist groups are self-generating, and his own evidence shows how easily they can become self-supporting. He is a trenchant critic of Israel's punitive expedition into Lebanon, arguing boldly that the Israeli government made the crucial mistake of believing in its own propaganda, and seeing the PLO as a stagnant organization with a power base limited to the refugee camps. Operation Peace for Galilee may have had short-term success, but in the longer term it has been at best ineffective, at worst damaging to Israel itself. He is also a devastating subverter of the US obsession with Gaddafi, by the simple method of demonstrating the minimal Libyan financial contribution to foreign terrorists over the last five years or more. His account of the bombing of Libya is exemplary, and sustains his argument that it showed "a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of modern terrorism".

Thus the answer to the initial question - whether such attacks can achieve their object - seems to be a resounding negative. But the point to register about the US air raids is that they were not in this sense rational; they were the visceral response of a government and, it seems, a public opinion gone mad beyond endurance by intangible opponents. At this level the kind of outraged reaction which powered the breakneck-paced publication of *Mind Dogs* is misplaced. Devotees of R. P. Thompson (and indeed physical) processes will be

amply rewarded by this book, but others may feel short-changed. It does not contain, for instance, an account of Operation El Dorado Canyon itself, but only of various people's views of it, and especially of the use of British-based F-111's. Luckily, one of these views is fruitful enough to justify the whole volume. Richard Falk's "Rethinking Counter-terrorism" is a finely controlled argument in favour of a rational response to terror. It is not merely a skilful dissection of the "almost existential primal dread" which has caused the American desire to "do something about terrorism" to become "virtually synonymous with taking military action". (Here it reinforces Edward Said's recently expressed perception that the word terrorism "has totally simplified and streamlined official as well as private American attitudes to the world", and has come to embody, even more than Communism,

"everything we do not like". It paints suggestively to the unlikely convergence of interests between terrorists and governments - both engaged for their own purposes in exaggerating the threat of terrorist action. And it recognizes that "progressives" have failed to find a credible alternative response to terrorism.

Here, perhaps, Falk does not go quite far enough. While it is, as he says, vitally necessary to stress that the real danger posed by terrorism has been exaggerated, it is not enough to point out that the statistical risk is small. People just do not view terrorist attacks as being on a par with natural hazards like lightning, or even man-made hazards like road accidents. The element of malice in terrorism is what makes each terrorist action, however small, deeply repellent. These are the results of deliberate human agency, and seem to call for

some deliberate human resistance. Unfortunately, the nature of the modern State makes it difficult for ordinary people to play a part in such resistance. The tendency to create super-professional special forces to do the job must raise fears, not only among libertarian sensationalists, that the remedy may prove more intractable than the affliction. It is ironic that the old common-law *passio commutata* (so badly remembered that it can be Spenserized by one of General Chatterbox's contributors as *conque passimus*), which expressed the responsibility of the whole community to preserve the law, should nowadays be regarded as an impediment to the effective use of military power within the United States. If the fight against terrorism is, as the Reagan administration proclaims, "the real war" now, it will surely be won only after the acceptance of this fact by the whole citizenry.

## The meagre harvest of mayhem

### Paul Johnson

**WILLIAM GUTTERIDGE** (Editor)  
The New Terrorism  
255pp. Minnsell. £22.50.  
07201 81231

**FRANKLIN L. FORD**  
Political Murder: From tyrannicide to terrorism  
440pp. Harvard University Press. £24.95.  
0674 686357

Large-scale terrorism in its modern form is nearly twenty years old (it can be dated from 1968-9). In the late 1980s it is occupying more attention, in the media and in the minds of many ordinary people, than either the fear of nuclear war or the reality of such conventional wars as the struggle between Iran and Iraq. The threat of terrorism is, as is believed to be, growing. It has become a major preoccupation of Western governments. It has a sizable impact on people's travel plans. There is thus a consumer demand for information about terrorism, and in the last ten years it has created a branch of the academic industry and produced a small library of studies.

How useful are such books? These two examples can perhaps best be evaluated by describing their contents. William Gutteridge brings together eight papers already published separately by the Institute for the Study of Conflict. Paul Wilkinson, who is Britain's leading academic specialist in the field, provides two of the essays: one on how democracies should respond to terrorism, the second on international co-operation. Clive Aston, a broker dealing in political risk insurance, writes an hostage-taking. There is a learned essay by a former diplomat, Frank Brenchley, on diplomatic immunities as a cover for State-sponsored terrorism. Dr Peter Janke, from an outfit called Control Risks Information Division, writes on Basque terrorism. Edward Moxon-Browne, from Queen's, Belfast, deals with the French experience. An American security consultant, Dr Vitorfranco S. Pisano, covers the Italian Red Brigades, and Hans Josef Horchem, described as "a well-known analyst of international terrorism", writes on the West German Red Army.

By contrast, Franklin Ford's *Political Murder* is a one-man compilation, from antiquity to the present, by a Harvard history professor. He has spent fifteen years assembling this directory of murder for political ends, and he works his way systematically through the ancient Israelites, the Greeks and the Romans, the Dark Ages and high Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Reformation, the slack period for political murder (as he sees it) in the eighteenth century and its revival in the nineteenth, and ends with five lengthy sections on the twentieth century. His method is mainly descriptive but he deals with theories of tyrannicide and other justifications for murder, as and when they appear. An endless succession of amineous parades through his pages: Joab and Becket, Cleopatra and Caesar, Thomas à Becket and Wallenstein, Coligny and Henri IV, Lincoln and Lord Frederick Cavendish, Heydrich, Darlan, Gandhi, Martin Luther

King, Kennedy, Moro and Sadat; he has much to say about their assassinations.

The trouble with such volumes is that the range and variety of the subject-matter forbid useful conclusions which have general application. Professor Ford's book, written with considerable zest, makes exhilarating if gruesome reading, but I am not sure it teaches us very much. Its subtitle rather implies that political murder has become less acceptable with the passage of time and the rise of due process. But I would have thought that the moral justification of tyrannicide was as strong (and as weak) today as in, say, the thirteenth century. His concept of political murder is so wide as to embrace almost any kind of malicious violence towards a public man, and his method involves the dubious device of isolating certain kinds of action from their historical background and lumping them together for purposes of comparison. Not much is served, say, by considering together the deaths of Halafermes and the Archduke of Austria.

Indeed, I doubt if the study of terrorism (as apposed to, say, a historian's taking a special interest in the field) is in its current form a legitimate academic pursuit, since it seems to be based upon the proposition that history teaches us what to do in the here-and-now - which most historians would dispute. Comparisons are just as likely to mislead as to instruct. The academic approach to terrorism suggests, for instance, that Britain might learn something about handling the IRA from Spain's experience with Basque terrorism (and vice versa), but after reading Dr Janke's essay on the ETA, I doubt it.

Besides, "terrorism" seems to have no accepted meaning. Professor Wilkinson writes: "Political terrorism may be briefly defined as a special form of clandestine, undeclared and unconventional warfare waged without any humanitarian restraints or rules." But most terrorist movements do in fact declare war against their opponents. This definition leaves out what, to my mind, is the most odious aspect of terrorism, the one which separates it from other forms of political violence: the fact that it is necessarily directed at harmless people. At the first international conference on terrorism, organized by the Jonathan Institute at Jerusalem in 1979, I and a number of politicians, including the late Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, worked out the following definition, which the conference accepted by vote: "Terrorism is the deliberate and systematic murder, maiming and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political ends." By this definition, terrorism is essentially a modern affair because it is so heavily dependent on high explosives, timing devices and fast transport.

Indeed, it is improbable that we will be much assisted in dealing with present-day terrorists by studying the past, except possibly in one respect. Both the Ford and the Gutteridge books suggest that political violence, as practised by assassins and terrorists, seldom achieves its ends. Most of the murders described by Ford had no clear consequences, or quite unpredictable ones. The tyrants whose removal would have changed history substantially - Hitler is an outstanding example, and probably Stalin too - usually contrived to pro-

tect themselves. As Professor Wilkinson points out, terrorism has an absurd record in securing what it ostensibly sets out to do. It was most effective against liberal empires, like Britain's, but only in accelerating a voluntary decolonizing process which would have occurred anyway. Its most notable success was in persuading the British government to hand over the Palestine problem to the United Nations in 1947. It provoked a change of regime in Uruguay in 1972 (much for the worse), and an Austrian decision in 1973 to close down its transit camp for Soviet Jews en route to Israel. Back in the 1970s, indeed, there were a number of cowardly decisions on minor points - releasing convicted terrorists and criminals, for instance, by Western governments. All the same, for the terrorists it was a meagre harvest. As the 1970s progressed and still more in the 1980s, the parliamentary regimes of the West have taken a much tougher line with terrorism, both individually and in concert. Terrorism no longer pays and in most cases it is counterproductive. Without the activities of the IRA, for instance, I do not believe there would be a single British soldier in Northern Ireland today.

That we could reduce the impact of terrorism still further is clear. I believe there is a strong case for reintroducing the death-penalty against terrorists, both for its deterrent effect and to relieve the further strain on our prison system caused by housing terrorist convicts. Professor Wilkinson also favours the death-penalty, though he rightly warns against regarding it as a panacea. Parliamentary democracies, in my view, would benefit from a special statutory declaration of outlawry, which would on capture deprive legally identified terrorists of their rights, permitting special courts to try, convict and sentence them, and the security forces to execute them, all by an accelerated process; and which would furthermore authorize the security forces to carry out pre-emptive attacks on terrorist bases and individuals. I would also favour statutory restraints on media coverage of terrorism. Most ordinary people would support this rigidist approach, but libertarian objections from the ruling élite, especially in politics, the media, the churches and academia, perhaps make it impracticable for the present.

All the same, Western governments are less and less inclined to allow terrorists sanctuary in states such as Libya. If a terrorist, operating from a once-privileged base, is forced to spend half his time looking after his own security, his capacity to kill will be reduced by 50 per cent. This is a consideration the Israelis have always appreciated. Until recently Western governments have been slow to grasp its force. However, the American air-strike on Libya in April was a welcome watershed in this respect. It indicated that the Reagan Administration, at least, now accepts the proposition which some of us have advanced for over a decade, that no terrorist should ever be allowed to feel safe anywhere in the world. In short the containment of terrorism (it can never be entirely eliminated) has moved from a purely defensive to an offensive phase. I suspect that academic studies of the subject, published in "ten years' time" will tell a very different story.

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## Creative symmetries

### Victoria Glendinning

ELIZABETH LONGFORD  
The Pebbled Shore: The memoirs of Elizabeth Longford  
351pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £14.95.  
01977 784639

This is an unusually entertaining autobiography. It establishes Elizabeth Longford as a feminist heroine, it will be by virtue of her cheerful imperialism: she has, in her eighty years, bridged the gap between the man's world and the woman's world by taking on both. As a small child, "I greatly underestimated my powers of getting what I wanted." This was soon put right. She became an "unusually ambitious" schoolgirl and an "academic snob"; at Oxford, where she read Greats, she was an "aesthetes' moll", attractive, clever and popular, adored by Hugh Gaitskill and Maurice Bowra (who proposed to her) among others.

Her father was a Harley Street ophthalmic surgeon, and came from a family of Strict Baptists. Her mother was a Unitarian, the niece of Joseph Chamberlain and first cousin to Neville Chamberlain. But religion and politics were not among Elizabeth Harman's early preoccupations. Only after Oxford did she become a Socialist; she gave courses of WEA and University Extension lectures in the Potteries, became involved in Labour Party politics,

and had high hopes of a parliamentary career.

Her husband Frank Pakenham (Lord Longford) was her Oxford contemporary. The course of true love did not run smooth; the chump on their courtship is headed "The Engagement Is Not Announced". If Lady Longford has a genius, it is for synthesis, and for reconciling opposites. Frank Pakenham became a Socialist under her influence, and many years later, after he became a convert to Roman Catholicism, she followed him into the Church. Lady Longford finds satisfaction in this marital "symmetry". Her husband's background and her own were jarringly different: the genetic mix has, famously, produced a large and creative clan. There is a photograph of them in this book with six of their children at a Foyles literary luncheon in 1969, captioned "The Pakenhams: A Family of Authors". Nearly two decades on, grandchildren are already bursting into print.

Lady Longford's trust in Lord Longford's qualities of mind and heart seemingly makes it possible for her to catalogue his vagaries mercilessly. Her own feet are firmly on the ground; his other-worldliness may be a vital factor in their "symmetry". She describes how she gave "invaluable" help to him in his political career after he had made a speech in the Potteries: "You were absolutely and utterly out of touch with your audience. They didn't understand a word you were saying." One understands how Lord Longford came to write a book entitled *Humility*. Lady Longford also

tells how Ann Fleming said it was a good thing Frank was not made Home Secretary, "or we should all be murdered by sex-maniacs". She tells how he raced in a point-to-point, the wrong way round the course; he went to the wrong church on their wedding day; he "lost his head" and guffawed instead of bowed to the Queen of the Netherlands; he disembarked from a plane before the steps had wheeled up; he is "a desperate loser of laichkeys, mzuors, clothes, library books".

"Babies accumulated" in the Pakenham household. There were eight in all. This was a result of Lady Longford's "addiction to motherhood", which continued as long as nature allowed. Competent in conception as in everything else, she learnt how to "take steps" to ensure that each new baby was of the sex that she wanted. Delicacy precludes her from being altogether specific about this technique, which was apparently known to Louis XIV and his queen.

Lady Longford took up authorship only after her political career proved impracticable; she withdrew as a prospective Labour candidate after her sixth child was born. There is no indication of how much, or little, this cost her. Since she is known to the present generation as a writer, the account of her long and active political commitment is of great interest; but she writes even better about her life as an author, in particular about working in the archives of Windsor Castle on her *Queen Victoria*; the places and circumstances in which writers work on their books, like the settings of a love

affair, often take on a heightened significance.

The *Pebbled Shore* as a whole reads like a love affair with life. Its strenuousness has been sweetened by worldly wealth: houses, jewels and incomes dropped in the Longfords' laps at intervals, by inheritance. There have been family tragedies and, for the author, periods of physical exhaustion and chronic migraines. Yet when, on the outbreak of war in 1939, she experienced "a more sensation of total discouragement and depression", the operative word is "rare". Nature, she writes, "may have given women an in-built optimism that is perhaps less necessary to men".

She concludes with a nicely judged vignette of herself writing this book in her "Lantern", a six-sided glasshouse in her Sussex garden, one summer evening. A fox stares in at her through the glass "like an urchin outside a sweetshop" and then disappears. "What had he seen? Perhaps a hen on a perch. Too hard to see. What does anybody see?"

What anybody sees is talent, confidence, commitment, achievement, good humour, energy beyond the normal range, and a certain ruthlessness. If there is more, it cannot be discerned through the apparently transparent wall of her memoirs. Like the fox, the reader presses his nose against the window. The author may agree with the fox that her subject was "too hard to get". Nevertheless, as a professional biographer with good material to work on, Elizabeth Longford has written a first-class biography of Elizabeth Longford.

## Star turnabouts

### Zachary Leader

LAURENCE LEAMER  
As Time Goes By: The life of Ingrid Bergman  
384pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.95.  
0241 118719

What makes an actress a star? On this point the studio head and the film theoretician, for once, agree: a star is a bankable commodity, or, as *Screem* magazine would have it, "a performer in a particular medium whose figure enters into subsidiary forms of circulation and then feeds back into future performances". By 1948, the year in which Alfred Hitchcock cast Ingrid Bergman in the lead of *Under Capricorn*, she was, in Hitchcock's estimation, "the biggest star in America". To get her, he had to offer 30 per cent of the film's profits. This, as it turned out, was a bad move: "Because even if the presence of Bergman represented a commercial asset", Hitchcock later told Truffaut, "it made the whole thing so costly that there was no point to it." Why, then, did Hitchcock hire her? The answer is that he was star-struck: "I was literally intoxicated at the thought of the cameras and flashbulbs that would be directed at Bergman and myself at London Airport. All of these externals seemed to be terribly important."

But "exteriority", of course, are important, being precisely what distinguish stars like Ingrid Bergman from other sorts of performers, including more versatile or accomplished actresses. This is because the star is always outside, or more than; the part so that even as the audience credits the illusion created - the part played - it also constantly notices and credits the agency by which the illusion is produced. Hence the prejudice against movie stars that derives from a very nineteenth-century notion of the relation between realism and high seriousness as well as from simple disapproval of fantasy. Stars, it is argued, cater to our most childish or egotistical wishes and female stars constitute what one critic (Molly Haskell) calls "the 'anima' of the collective male unconscious".

The forms this "anima" takes are of several sorts: sex goddesses, the earth mother, the enigma. In Ingrid Bergman's case, the image or persona was established very early: "In three of her first six films", writes Laurence Leamer, her latest biographer,

Ingrid played an innocent woman involved in an illicit affair. In the fourth she was the catalyst for what could have developed into an adulterous affair. In these films her innocence is based on a mixture of

ignorance and the exonerating of pure emotion. For her audience she sacrificed behaviour that the moral dictates of her time considered slightly sordid or improper.

The appeal, in other words, was relatively subtle; not so much a matter of innocence soiled, as of buried passion and need.

Bergman herself worked hard to cultivate this image, and was mostly careful about publicity. But its contradictions were always harder to maintain in life than on the screen. Until her notorious affair with Rossellini in the late 1940s, Bergman's off-screen persona was that of a correct and contented wife and mother. In reality, according to Leamer, she neglected her family, while also sleeping with just about every leading man and director with whom she worked. Nor were these affairs entirely matters of passion. "In my whole life", recalls Gary Cooper, "I never had a woman so in love with me as Ingrid was. The day after the picture ended, I couldn't get her on the phone."

This element of calculation, or robust professionalism, was noted by others as well. "In some ways", recalls Christopher Isherwood, "she was the most beautiful woman I ever met

- not that women are my speciality . . . She had a certain aspect of her that was almost masculine. She was so professional, when studio people would pinch her ass or something, she would give them a dry smile as if they were in a locker room."

Bergman's affair with Rossellini produced "the biggest celebrity scandal in postwar film history". The ideal homemaker abandoned daughter and husband to run off to Italy with a married man, one by whom, it was soon revealed, she was pregnant. "It was Ingrid Bergman who had done this", writes Leamer, "not Rita Hayworth or Lana Turner. Ingrid had refused to be what America thought she was and, indeed, she had wanted America to think her to be." The affair also marked a turning point in Bergman's acting career, since each of the films she made with Rossellini flopped, in part because he cast her in a new sort of role. This role was a prototype for the lost and rootless heroines of later films by Antonioni and Fellini: the women she played in Rossellini's films were alienated, drifting, disconnected. That Bergman herself was uncomfortable in this role, and never entirely understood it (to

Laurence Leamer's biography is well researched, but ploddingly written. Though full of information and anecdote, no consistent portrait of its subject emerges, and at crucial moments it is hard to tell what exactly is meant of Bergman. There is a salacious, "tell-all" strain to the book, as well as a fair bit of purple prose. Only the excellent photographs make clear what all the fuss was about.

De Sica she was "la grande ignora") accounts in part for the relief she felt on returning to Hollywood. When she began work on *Anastasia* in 1951 she declared herself "glad to be back with the pros".

In the post-Rossellini period Bergman's career took another turn, one common to stars of her type. The roles she now gravitated towards (with the exception of a few pot-boiler comedies) were increasingly grand and elevated. "She only wanted to appear in masterpieces", complained Hitchcock, "except for Joan of Arc she could never conceive of anything grand enough." This was the point, also, at which she returned to the stage, in a series of "classical" parts which were also, invariably, star turns.

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writer while awaiting demobilization, for "it seemed to me to be the only avenue of escape, not only from the Navy but from the purposeless act of being the self I then was". A featureless child in a Pontypidd family of war casualties, he made a study of the behaviour of fathers, digging on allotments, washing of coal-dust in the baths, taking their sons to rugby matches.

In hospital, he made friends with other fatherless men. He had contracted Eales's disease, affecting his eyesight, and the treatment was very painful - though, he says, "writing about it in fictional form, I made it funny". Looking back he quotes from one of his novels, *Home to the Empty House*. The long stay in hospital provided the framework for this book. The striking anecdotes, presented in an apparently random order, are the vivid memories of a man reflecting his imprisonment in a locked cell.

His childhood awareness of the grotesquerie of other people does not desert him in later life, confronted by mad, or puerile, landladies, amateur theatricals in the Royal Navy; fellow patients in hospital. The vignettes are remorselessly detailed, in a spirit of Dickensian realism, touched with melancholy. Richards adopts a jaunty tone, cheery and plucky, but he has often felt bewildered by life, not at home with the groups he has entered. He became a

## Passion and the light purse

### John Lucas

FREDERICK R. KARL and LAURENCE DAVIES  
(Editors)  
The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad  
Volume Two: 1898-1902  
483pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50.  
0521 257434

"It must take itself seriously for the public to take it so", Henry James wrote of the novel in 1884. The essay from which the remark comes, "The Art of Fiction", was James's considered reply to Walter Besant's claim that writers of fiction should try to anticipate audience requirements and produce work that catered for their demands. James will have none of it. For him, the audience lacks any certain idea of the art of fiction and its views can therefore be of no significance to the writer seriously concerned with the novel as high art. Most renders of fiction, he concludes, would "agree that the 'artistic' idea would spoil some of their fun". When he wrote these words James was secure in his sense of having an audience. By the end of the 1880s, and after the semi-disaster of *The Tragic Muse*, this was no longer the case. In 1899 he told his brother that he was "quite divorced" from such matters as circulation and popularity.

James's stated determination to devote all his genius to the art of fiction, whatever the cost to his pocket, made him a hero to younger writers in the 1890s. He was the master, and among those who worshipped at his altar was Conrad. Writing to his friend John Galsworthy in March 1899, Conrad chides him for complaining that James does not write from the heart:

To me even the [Real Thing] seems to flow from the heart because and only because the work approaches so near perfection yet does not strike cold. Technical perfection unless there is some real glow to illumine and warm it from within must necessarily be cold. I argue that in H.J. there is such a glow and not a dim one either, but to us used, absolutely accustomed, to unartistic expression of fine, headlong, honest (or dishonest) sentiments the art of H.J. does appear heartless. The outlines are so clear the figures so finished, chiselled, carved and brought out that we exclaim - we, used to the Shades of the contemporary fiction, to the more or less malformed shades - we exclaim - Stone! Not at all.

It is in such letters - and there are several of them scattered among the pages of this volume - that we can understand something of Conrad's determination to succeed in an art form which was, in Ford Madox Ford's words, "at once his passion and his agony". The agony was partly caused by his poverty, which, to quote Ford again, affected him "like a physical pain". Of that there can be no doubt, as letter after letter testifies.

Still, these things are relative. Conrad's earnings, though by no means spectacular, were enough to keep him well above the breadline, even in the years covered by the present volume, when he was a critical but not a popular success. Yet he undoubtedly felt that he ought to be able to provide for his wife and baby son a standard of living that would reflect some credit on his aristocratic background and at the same time justify his having given up a career at sea for that of writer. That he occasionally doubted the wisdom of what he had done may be inferred from his having seriously considered trying to get the command of another ship, to which end he went so far as to enlist Cunningham Graham's help. But nothing came of this and he continued to be tied to his desk, complaining about bills and his inability to imagine, sweating over deadlines, and sending letters to David Meldrum, William Blackwood's literary adviser, in which he typically asked for money while apologizing for so doing. "Pardon me for invading your home with my business," he wrote on one occasion, "I won't offend again." But he did, and it must have been as hateful to him as turning down Com. Crane's request for money when his great friend, Stephen Crane, was near death. "You may imagine that had it been in my power to render you any sort of service I would not have waited for any sort of appeal. I am a man without connections, without influence and without means. The daily subsistence is a matter of anxious thought to me. What can I do?"

It was a conviction that led him to write a quite marvellous letter to Hugh Clifford, in which he criticized the latter's *In a Corner of Asia*, a copy of which Clifford had sent him. (Clifford was British Resident in Pahang, Malaya, and had written enthusiastically of *Almayer's Folly*.) Conrad quotes a sentence from Clifford's book in order mercilessly to dissect and re-write it, guts another, says of a particular phrase that "it is a phrase anybody can write to fit any sort of a situation; it is the sort of thing that writes itself"; and then adds:

It is the sort of thing I write twenty times a day and (with the fear of overlooking facts behind me) spend half my nights in taking out of my work - upon which depends the daily bread of the house (literally - from day to day); not to mention (I dare hardly think of it) the future of my child, of those nearest and dearest to me, between whom and the bleakest want there is only my pen - as long as life lasts. And I can sell all I write - as much as I can write!

Volume Three, *Actors and Actresses*, in the projected four-volume International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers has recently appeared. Brief biographies of some of the best-known names in the history of the cinema are supplemented by comprehensive chronological lists of their roles, together with a bibliography and critical assessment (1986). St James Press. £29.50. 0-912289-08-2.

One thing he couldn't or wasn't prepared to do was to accept advances from publishers when he knew there was no likelihood of his honouring them. Algernon Methuen wrote to him enquiring about the possibilities of publishing some of his work and Conrad replied:

Candidly I dare not make any promises. I write with difficulty, I don't keep my word, I worry my publishers, I try their tempers. I am afraid it would take much better writing than mine to make up for these defects - of character.

And when Methuen persisted, Conrad spelt out the nature of his friendly relations with Blackwood and added "The disposal of my work cannot be governed purely by questions of payment." This is both candid and honourable, as is a letter to J. B. Pinker, written in reply to Pinker's enquiry as to whether he could become Conrad's American agent:

My method of writing is so unbusiness-like that I don't think you could have any use for such an unsatisfactory person. I generally sell a work before it is begun, get paid when it is half done and don't do the other half till the spirit moves me. I must add that I have no control over the spirit - neither has the man who has paid the money.

It might almost be Edwin Reardon talking.

But there is a difference. The protagonist of *New Grub Street* is, as he knows, the possessor of a very minor talent. Conrad, for all his black moods of despair, his sterile periods, his grumbling insistence that he lacked invention, nevertheless sold to his publishers work which commanded the instant respect of men whose judgment he could trust. It would be foolish to underestimate or dismiss the fears expressed in a letter to Edward Garnett, where he speaks of "the horror" of a four-month period when he simply couldn't write: "It has destroyed already the little belief I used to have in myself. I am appalled at the absurdity of my situation - at the folly of my hopes, at the blindness that had kept me up in my gropings." But it has to be remembered that at this time he was trying to write *The Rescue*, a novel which simply wouldn't come right, and that his correspondent was after all a man of sensitivity and literary reputation. Conrad did not lack for people who believed in his worth.

Nor, on other occasions, did he lack belief in himself. There is nothing of Reardon's impotent self-pity about him, and his devotion to his art is an altogether tougher matter. "[You] never made a poorer song / That you might have a heavier purse", Yeats said of various of his poet comrades who had started out in the 1890s. The same might be said of Conrad, but it would be necessary to add that, unlike Yeats's companions, Conrad survived. This undoubtedly has much to do with his chosen medium. By the end of the nineteenth century novel writing and publishing were big business. It wasn't difficult to make a living from them. Hence the need for writers who took themselves seriously to distance themselves from the market-place, or at least to insist that they weren't in it simply for the money. Hence, too, the obsession with *le mot juste*. Conrad told Galsworthy in April 1899:

I am anxious about these thousand words you've written. At this juncture every word is an object to be considered anxiously with heart searches and in a spirit of severe resolution. Don't write them (words) hurriedly. I am glad you have written no more than one thousand. If it had been only one hundred I would have said: It is well. Don't smile and think that it is only my own cursed tongue-tied state that gives me that point of view. There may be something of that of course - but for the most part it is sheer conviction.

It was a conviction that led him to write a quite marvellous letter to Hugh Clifford, in which he criticized the latter's *In a Corner of Asia*, a copy of which Clifford had sent him. (Clifford was British Resident in Pahang, Malaya, and had written enthusiastically of *Almayer's Folly*.) Conrad quotes a sentence from Clifford's book in order mercilessly to dissect and re-write it, guts another, says of a particular phrase that "it is a phrase anybody can write to fit any sort of a situation; it is the sort of thing that writes itself"; and then adds:

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George Harcourt's "The Artist and his Family", 1905, is on show at The Fine Art Society, 12 Great King Street, Edinburgh, in the exhibition *At Home: Scottish Interiors 1800-1920*, until September 20.

This is said to make it manifest that I practise the faith which I take the liberty to preach - if you will allow me to say so - in a brotherly spirit.

There are several other such letters in among the many inevitably humdrum ones, and they go far towards justifying Ford Madox Ford's picture of Conrad, crouched on the floor of a train taking him up to London, attacking proofs, altering phrase after phrase, in search of an unattainable perfection.

Most of Conrad's commentators, including Zdzislaw Najder in his monumental *Joseph Conrad: A chronicle*, treat Ford as a very unreliable witness. In the letter, yes. But in the spirit! At the time covered by these letters Ford and Conrad were beginning their literary collaboration, of which *Romance* (1903) was to be the first fruit, and Ford, a younger, impressionable, but immensely talented and sensitive man, had a good deal of opportunity to observe Conrad at close quarters. What he records in *Return to Yesterday* and elsewhere fits very well with the Conrad who emerges from the letters. Najder quotes a passage in which Ford recalls Conrad suggesting that their collaboration would help him improve his English.

"When I write I think in French and then translate the words of my thoughts into English. This is an impossible process for one desiring to make a living by writing in the English language . . .". Ford, as was his wont, exaggerated. Najder says. Maybe, but in some of the most interesting letters of this volume Conrad chooses to write in French, and they are the ones where he is most impressively thinking.

The recipient of the letters is Cunningham Graham and to him Conrad speaks out as to no one else. Sometimes he seems to be almost playfully opposing Cunningham Graham's socialism and his belief in the future. Certainly there are occasions when his French feels altogether different than the jocularity (it seems the right word) of the English letters, where a kind of ponderous public-schoolboyese betrays the pleasure that he took in reading Marryat. To Graham he writes:

Et les mots s'envolent; et il ne reste rien, entendez vous? Absolument rien, oh homme de foi! Rien. Un moment, un clin d'oeil et il ne reste rien - qu'une goutte de boue, de boue froide, de boue morte lancée dans l'espace noir, tournant autour d'un soleil éteint. Ni pensée, ni son, ni âme. Rien.

Jess sends her best regards. I am ever Yours

"Rien." It both is the last word and allows him to have it. It's as though he has won a debating game.

But on other occasions the tone is weightier, more considered. Thus, in reply to Cunningham Graham's invitation to attend a peace meeting (Conrad went but refused to sit on the platform) he writes: "L'homme est un animal mécanique. Sa mécanique doit être organisée. Le crime est une condition nécessaire de l'existence organisée. La société est essentiellement criminelle - un elle n'existerait pas." If this letter reminds us that Conrad was the author of *Heart of Darkness*, which indeed he had recently finished, it also points towards *The Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*, which were several years off. In other words, the letters to Cunningham Graham, which are



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# On not being overwhelmed

Patricia Craig

ANITA BROOKNER  
A Misalliance  
191pp. Cape. £9.95.  
023403405

Anita Brookner has become famous for writing about misplaced affections, and the consequent slights and disappointments meted out to unimpeachable women—women who, after all, have their resources: literature, as it may be, or a sharp eye, or voluntary work at a local hospital. The last is a practice of the newest Brookner heroine, Blanche Vernon, a woman of private means, with an absent husband, a self-possessed exterior and an ability to derive knowledge and stimulation from those paintings in the National Gallery in which a full-blooded paganism is allegorically and ornamentally expressed.

Blanche, in tweed suit and polished shoes, is often to be found regarding a painted nymph or goddess who stands far some ideal of allurements; and in the tableau thereby obtained is an indication of one continuing concern of the Brookner novels: an upposition of decorum and myriads. This author's heroines are low in vitality and high in integrity; among their assets are an ironical disposition and a robust cast of mind, but they are ill-fitted to be the recipients of erotic overtures, unless these come from an unusually discerning man. Men, by and large, like a bit of bluntness about the business of sexual attraction. Mr Neville, in *Hotel du Lac*, proposes marriage to Edith Hope but sinks his net elsewhere. Running through the head of Ruth, in *A Start in Life*, is the terrible line from Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet*: "Je suis trop laide, il ne fera pas attention à moi." The state of mind engendered by this apprehension, and a refusal to be overwhelmed by it, is in some measure an ingredient of all the books.

Brookner's protagonists are endowed with

## A myth-kitty

Jo-Ann Goodwin

JENNY JOSEPH  
Persephone  
294pp. Newcastle upon Tyne:  
Bloodaxe. £12.95 (paperback, £4.95).  
090642770

One of the fundamental activities of the feminist movement has been the rediscovery and reinterpretation of myth. If it is through myth that we understand and value our world, the women's movement argues, then it is absolutely necessary to reinvent the prevailing mythologies in a context which allows women the freedom and self-expression which have been denied them.

The myth of Demeter and her daughter Persephone is eminently suitable for feminist use, providing as it does a parable for the relationship between mother and daughter, a relationship destroyed by the intervention of the male, which results inevitably in grief and desolation. Jenny Joseph's book describes Demeter's misery at the loss of her daughter, her search to retrieve her, and Persephone's entry into maturity and sexuality in the dark kingdom of Hades. The story provides an elaboration of the despair and abandonment felt by all parents whose children must eventually grow up and leave, and of the hostility commonly felt by the parent towards the sexual partners who have provided the alternative home to which the child flees; the conclusion, one of moderation and good sense (everyone gets a share of Persephone and the crops begin to grow again), suggesting the dangers of obsessive love, the need for each succeeding generation to fulfil itself sexually, no matter how bizarre the chosen way appears to be.

In *Persephone* Jenny Joseph mixes forms in the tradition of "old practice": music hall and its modern "T.V. descendant". Joseph is already known as a poet, and poetry bears the main burden of the narrative expansion—the voices of Demeter, Persephone and Hades being used to tell their own stories in a rather ponderous blank verse. The prose pieces which

the formality and asperity of a nineteenth-century heroine. "One hardly notices the proximity of the glaciers", observes Edith Hope, an holiday in Switzerland, when she's taken out for an evening; later, she is allowed a controlled outburst against cultivated winsomeness, such as occurs in the type of female who takes for granted her right to make illogical fusses. "Such women strike me as dislavourable." In *A Misalliance*, Blanche Vernon ironically laments her inability to throw a tantrum; such women can neither experience, nor inspire, the smallest impulse towards anarchic behaviour. Whether this is a matter for dismay or gratification is a question that occasionally exercises them. They may acknowledge, without understanding, the lure of disruption.

Blanche lost her husband Bertie, an estate agent, to a young person known as Mousie, holder of a degree in computer sciences, and possessor of winning ways; it's a marvel to Blanche, and others like her, that the trivial and affected should get away with their ploys, but experience has shown her that they do. The crassest lines, in the Brookner novels, are apportioned to characters susceptible to wiles: we remember Richard, in *A Start in Life*, remarking of a tiresome young woman undergoing a personal crisis, "Before her marriage she was a very promising potter." Bertie Vernon goes one better: Mousie, he tells his cynical sister, "has given me a new lease of life." A question arises: if Bertie is capable of uttering these words without self-mockery, why on earth should worldly, discriminating Blanche regret his departure? Perhaps what she regrets is the distortion of his manner, along with his appearance: there he sits, when he comes to visit her, inappropriately attired at Mousie's instigation, "in clothes that broadcast messages of youth and leisure". A polo-necked jersey is not his natural wear.

Blanche's voluntary social work brings her into contact with a feckless little family, with whom she allies herself, principally out of fellow-feeling for the daughter, a three-year-old

exponent of themes they raise follow the direction taken by the poems, but are less predictable; hence the early part of the book is taken up with loss and sorrow, which later develops into an acceptance of the vagaries and rewards of life as Demeter is allowed to partially reclaim her daughter. The difficulty with the prose sections is that too few of them are given sufficient space to develop, and the result is an unsatisfactory collection of short prose pieces which end the moment they promise to become interesting. Moreover, Joseph has an anachronistic attachment to the mores of the early 1970s, the flots and squats to which daughters of modern-day Demeters are spirited being peopled by young men with long hair, reposing on floor cushions and addressing each other as "man". The women wear "long skirts" that might have been made from a table-cloth and "little skimpy tops" that showed everything. These characters are involved in left-wing politics, which involvement apparently consists of denouncing "the bourgeoisie" and heaping reprimands on friends who "sell out". The impression given is that this is Joseph's concept of delinquency; her idea of youthful rebellion being to traipse about in long patterned skirts and cook vast pots of lentils for ideologically immature men.

Despite the book's title, it is clear that the author identifies strongly with the position of Demeter, and because of this the book becomes an exercise in emotional catharsis. The lack of direction and control is further shown by the insertion of a "photo-story" of the kind in teenage magazines such as *My Joy* to add further comment on the Persephone story. The purpose of this is obscure, little is gained by the addition, and it is tempting to regard the inclusion of the photograph as a vague gesture towards youth; an attempt on the part of the author to suggest that she understands young people and is able to adopt the idioms they use.

One is left after all this with a well-meaning but unsatisfactory work, the experiments with genre providing novelty but little else. The changing voices of the narrative and the alternating forms serve to confuse the issue rather than to encourage an understanding of different perspectives.

possessed of unnatural gravity. The name of this child is Elinor and already, it seems to Blanche, she has dissociated herself from the profligacy inherent in her parents' way of life: she refuses to speak. Sally Beamish, Elinor's step-mother, leads a life subject to vicissitudes; at present she frequently needs "to be tidied over", while her husband is employed abroad in some vague capacity by a rich American. Sally is another in the mould of Mousie—wilful and guileful, and ill-hand with women, except at moments of exigency, when some benefit may be derived from them. On the faces of such self-seekers and hedonists are reproduced the expressions of certain painted nymphs: so it dawns on Blanche. The tortoise and the hare, we remember, supplied a motif for *Hotel du Lac*; and the implied contrast, between steadiness and showiness (or something very similar), gets another figuration in the ascetic and

## What we are here for

John Melmoth

A. N. WILSON  
Love Unknown  
202pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.  
024119227

When not tackling problems of literary analysis (Dostoevsky's characters are "dirty and bonkers"), Simon and Monica are the kind of adulterous lovers inclined to while away their stolen hours together with a little dilettante art criticism. On a visit to the National Gallery they pause in front of Van Eyck's "Marriage of Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami"; Simon wonders if she is doing the right thing, Monica is blithely certain that she is. They agree, however, that not only does the picture delight in the ordinary but that it also documents passion: "It's passion in the way Jane Austen is passionate, *n'est-ce pas*." Monica maintains that Giovanna's demureness does not mean "that underneath there isn't a swirling tempest . . . She's swirling, just a little." So, he confesses, is Simon.

Whatever the merits of this account of the picture (and from another point of view it could be seen as the marriage of joylessness and pudding compliance), the apparent common sense about the relationship between sexuality and domesticity is entirely reasonable, and entirely at odds with the conduct of any of the principals of *Love Unknown*. Whereas A. N. Wilson has in the past dealt unerringly with life's usual war of sexual coincidence, Simon and Monica's apparent coincidence of wants discomposes him. Monica, normally an exemplar of sense and sensibility, wanders around in a daze of "almost cretinous happiness" while Simon's loss of a sense of proportion manifests itself both in a total insensitivity to cliché—"You have it in your power to give me back my innocence"—and in heavyweight sexual-metaphysical perorations along these lines: "We weren't meant to grub about this earth simply being all right and making money, and eating and crapping and getting wrinkled and dying. We were meant for something else." His conception of this something appears to involve spending time in hotel bedrooms with a woman who is not his wife.

It is true that Monica attempts to curb his rhetorical excesses—"you are talking like a child"—but there is no persuading oneself that this is sustained spoof. We are required to believe that people behave and talk like this. If the earth doesn't move during their first brief encounter, the heavens certainly do, and they are able to stand naked at the window watching the lightning over London. Sex, when it is not smelly and trivial, is "vast, awesome, completely strange": not a conspicuously Austenian perspective.

Whereas Wilson's last novel, *Gentlemen in England*, was an exercise in historical fiction, *Love Unknown* explores "prehistory". "Once upon a time, some twenty years ago, there were three nice young women who lived together, at 73b Oakmoor Road, London NW2." Prehistory is the time when myths are enacted, and Richelieu's (another example of Wilson's fondness for naming his female characters after obscure saints), Belinda (*de la* "in the era of mini-skirts and beehive hair-

dos) and Monica are old ardent mythopoeists. The function of myth is to transform the "subtleties" of shared existence into glorious memories, to render squabbles about telephone bills idyllic. It also serves to give structure and meaning to the miseries of Richelieu and Simon, the "Man of Her Dreams", her "All in All" with whom she had been living "happily ever after" ever since.

This whole preamble is dreadfully arch. When he is not venting sexist spite on the women's "cornflake-colloquies, ironing-intervals and hairdrying-confessionals", Wilson's playfulness is plonking: "I am sorry to say that it had to be me, their chronicle, to record . . .". We are his intrusions consistent. When Simon and Richelieu's first do what we are here for "it was as though they were in touch with the deepest forces of Nature". How ironic is that particular capital letter? The novel is not without its successful crafty moments—we are introduced to Leonard Bernstein who drives a taxi, unidentified birdsong proves to be a startling imitation's thrust. However, too many of its conceits seem simply concealed.

Wilson's characters explore the full emotional range from prissiness to whimsy (Simon is the sole representative of robust shittiness). Their preoccupations and locutions reveal the central fact that they are profoundly out of touch. When Monica discovers Simon with his secretary at Fontainebleau she regards her as "floozie" and the philanderer at bay as a "cad". In a subsequent mood of erotic solicitation she and Simon compile a list of the faults of the modern world according to aesthetic rather than moral criteria—Wimples, expanded polystyrene, motorways, three-piece suits. Even at emotional extremes, people are always "persons" and one is careful to ask "between whom and whom?" Wilson is capable, too, of personical pedantry—the invariable apostrophe in "bus" simultaneously conforms to and chokes on modern usage. And why should Putney be "the suburb of South West London known as Putney"?

As its title suggests, *Love Unknown* indulges in what the protagonists might describe as a *morceau* of religious musing about what is called, in *Gentlemen in England*, the "evolving aspects of life in the Church of England". Simon's brother Bartle is a North London vicar who clings during a period of crisis to soft theology, confirmed rather than qualified by what the thunder says—the thunder so thoughtlessly conjured up by Simon and Monica. Madeleine Richelieu's mother, although over actually "croyante", mixed during her youth in circles of literary High Anglicanism. She retains a memory of that blend of "faintly camp irony" and "underlying mystic seriousness" which characterizes much of *Love Unknown*.

The novel, Wilson's ninth, is a pallid successor to *Wise Virgin and Scandal* (*Gentlemen in England* being an elegant freak). Not only does it introduce characters who are hard to like, it is impossible to get excited about, but it is so self-conscious that it lacks any real sense of its own identity. Too sophisticated to celebrate marriage and domesticity, too sentimental to stoate to be a plausible account of sexual passion, too esoteric in its concerns, too cold for comfort, it mutters style in the place of substance, ambivalence in the place of complexity.

## The music-marathon man

Valentine Cunningham

ANTHONY BURGESS  
The Piano Players  
208pp. Hutchinson. £8.95.  
0091651905

It was a happy day when Anthony Burgess put himself to school at Joyce's fiction. No one has re-written and lived off *Finnegans Wake* more productively. *The Piano Players* is in Burgess's most dazzling post-*Wake*, I'll-be-Shem-the-Pumpkin mode: language-games, history, religion, art and sex remain his preferences.

His narrator is Ellen Henshaw, gossip-prone to the cassette-player of a wandering musical journalist. She is in retirement in France, notorious for founding Schools of Love that teach men how to play women, to do Hamlet's things to their stops and their heartstrings just as if they were musical instruments. The clue for using musical lessons as the basis for instruction in lovemaking comes from her father, a piano player, silent-movie accompanist, narrative musician, copious inventor of his own tunes, deft exploiter and adapter of other people's tunes, who taught his daughter to play the piano in no time at all and invented a Violin Melod for the very young (since pinched by a wily Jap).

Billy Henshaw is Burgess's most congenial

kind of consciousness, a capacious one which will take any amount of whatever his author chooses to pour into it in the way of obsessions, likes, dislikes, facts, philologies, knowledge of all sorts, Jaycan quashed quotations, current puns and so on. Henshaw is a most likeable musician and womanizer, a virtuoso of extraordinary productivity and technical variety. Sweating away cheekily in the dark of his occupational orchestra-pits, he can accompany any film whatsoever, in any key. He'll produce any effect required on his array of bells, zither and bare strings, using a coalhammer, his own nose, or even a Bass's Pale Ale Battle (in between swigs from it). During the Blackpool Piano Marathon that kills him he knocks off the odd opera (on the theme of the tale) and ten symphonies (he has to show he's one up on Beethoven). He's a virtuoso, too, with words, danc out of business by the talkies but in his own person a one-man talkie, a producer of dizzying arpeggios of words and words about words (including, naturally, words about the root meaning of the word *arpeggio*). "Language, girl, language", are his last words to his daughter from the floor of the Str Cinema's piano enclosure, on to which he has slumped dead-drunk after a hilarious send-up of Sid Schwartz and Emmuël Rubinstein's C-of-E-sanctioned version of *The Light of the World*. And like her father, and the novel that contains them both, Ellen Henshaw minds nothing if not her language.

## Mystic emergencies

J. K. L. Walker

GABRIEL FIELDING  
The Women of Guinea Lane  
300pp. Hutchinson. £9.95.  
0091639808

*The Women of Guinea Lane*, Gabriel Fielding's first novel for a number of years, is an odd, dislocated work, part realistic account of life in an emergency hospital during the autumn of 1942, part semi-mystical exploration of the nature of women. For young Dr John Blyden (who has featured in earlier novels by Fielding), his first job as a house surgeon at Guinea Lane Hospital, in semi-rural Middlesex, develops into a *rite de passage*, during which he gradually comes to understand the lives of the patients, nurses and medical staff with whom his duties bring him into contact, and falls in love with a young Cockney receptionist, Minna Frohisher.

All this is acted out against the drab, tense background of wartime England, as the RAF bombers thunder overhead on their nightly missions. But the war, too, is seen as something organic, to be equated perhaps with the mysteries of life and death which the hospital embodies. London is

waiting . . . the whole city swailing in silence, a change that is bound to come. All the people in that just-visible city are sitting still Time; this time, not suddenly, not happily, but with the certainty with which people await a birth; as confidently as children await joy.

The novel's style here suggests that Fielding is consciously setting out to blur his narrative into myth—a sense that is reinforced by other features of the novel: stilted dialogue, odd nomenclature, uncertain topography. These may equally be the outcome of miscalculation or forgetfulness; hence the impression of oddity, of dislocation. It is not possible, for instance, to walk from Hyde Park Corner to "Slane Street" Underground Station passing the Albert Memorial en route; nor to imagine towns in Middlesex called Hulloshold, Batsford or Stourmond; nor, in 1942, could one buy Jewellery on Boxing Day or launch anti-aircraft rockets from Hyde Park or rationally elect to travel from Middlesex to the South Coast by bus.

Women doctors named Chlorinda Graemes or Gelda Whooper are more evidently contrived. Dr Whooper drinks Bass and speaks music-hall Yorkshire ("And me dress? Foolish enough, I got it down Harrods only last week"); she is "a new kind of person: 'career oriented'"; she is "shrieking on impressing women with her freedom than men with her

Billy's annivoraussness licenses the attractive eclecticism of Ellen's musico-sexual life's work, and the hustling opportunism of her narrative. Through her, Burgess is able to bang on gloriously about mothers-in-law, Emetics, Catholic priests reading the ricing pages in the confessional, Blackpool faad, Prots who always talk at RCs, films, seduction, songs and music-hall turns. The resulting rag-bag is as enjoyably comic-operatic in its farce and mayhem as are the various set-piece scenes in which father, daughter, landlord, landlady, seducers and seduces of either sex clash noisily an and aff the public stage.

Teaching and lessons are the stuff of this fiction. Billy teaches piano and etymologies; Ellen's instructions are the sexual ones her paying customers get. They're also the education she hands out as she goes through the cassette-recorder, in things like the shape of pre-War Concert Party programmes or the dict of the northern prior that she was brought up on. Mainly, though, Billy, Ellen and Anthony Burgess join pedagogical farces to show how verbal marathons are made, how inventions can be sustained, words and text spun out.

Many key pages of this novel are taken up simply (or rather, complicately) with listings of the titles of numbers Billy plays on his attempted Marathon. The muner is Burgess's most direct tribute here to *Finnegans Wake*. Serious, joky, made-up, historically accurate and apt to their times, or machronistically be-

## In a nutshell

Galen Strawson

C. K. STEAD  
The Death of the Body  
192pp. Collins/Harvill. £9.95.  
0002230674

*The Death of the Body* is a slight work, but it's neat and enjoyable—the exact minor by-blow of an author who can hit harder. It is also rather odd, because its structure is so much grander than its content: the simple fictional core is dwarfed by the narrative game-plan, the apparatus.

The distinction between structure and content is currently disreputable and often indefensible. But never mind. The fundamental structural fact about *The Death of the Body* is that it is (or appears to be) a story within a story, a shell enclosing a small nut. The shell story features a New Zealander in Europe writing a story—the nut story. The nut story is about Sufism, drugs, philosophy, adultery and death in New Zealand (the Sufism is fake, the drugs are hard and soft, the philosophy is the Mind-Body problem—which made a fictional appearance only last year in Rebecca Goldstein's *The Mind-Body Problem*, the adultery is the professor-student type, and the death is suspicious). It is also about marriage and friendship, the flora and fauna of New Zealand and their Maori names, the quality of the weather and the lead, the rain and the light.

The nut story sounds quite rich in content, but it's very light. It is clear and well planned; the temporarily unconnected sections of the story are cleverly phased. But it seriously lacks depth—plot depth, character depth. The main elements are highly conventional, and add up in a very pat fashion. And that is what is odd. The nut story simply doesn't deserve the attention it gets in the shell story, in which it is used to exercise familiar, strenuously self-conscious issues about "textuality" and authorial notoriety.

Just who is the author? Well, there is an "I", and this "I" is "the voice of the Story", the nut story. Unwe'l name? To be honest I have not . . . But if you don't believe a voice can exist without a name, call me Ismael, or Philip, or take whatever name you find on the cover of the book. These won't be correct, but if they silence your anxieties and permit you to listen, then let them serve. In the end an identity will be forged. Or it won't. That will be for you to decide.

This is a trifle cute. And it's hard to decide, because there's another voice on the loose—"the voice from the blue folder". Which sounds like the voice of the Story. But it can't be, because it speaks (or sulkily refuses to speak)

fore their time, the titles are poured out, just like the reams of verse, rhymes and ditties, that Ellen can recite or Billy can remember. Billy can keep his show going, he can churn them out. Billy, we're told, "was never stuck". Nnr. All this is a way of demonstrating, is Burgess.

Ellen pretends to have an abysmal memory for names. "Something like Vermicelliano", she'll say. "Angasturo or something". "Olga and Natusha Solzhenitsnaya. I may have got that a bit wrong". "Fellini or Fellaziane or whatever his name is or was". She keeps getting the Marathon mnanager's name differently: Jerry Flyblow, or Flowlaw, Firefluc, Fourth-floor, Fieldflow, or Flayfleas. But her erring is as unerring as Billy's nightly choices of film music (*Agnus Dei*, it might be, for a butcher's advert), as canny as the name Henshaw itself (we'd expect Burgess to be familiar with D. H. Lawrence's "Cocksure Women and Hensure Men"). What Burgess's confident practice of naming and misnaming demonstrates is the power of names. Whatever their status, historical, intertextual, accurate, mistaken, real, unreal, they can sustain the unlikely of worlds in being. The sheer generative power of words was the *Wake*'s most potent lesson: a lesson it is implied here, that is much better for the young, though less easy to follow, than the Yamasaki Violin Method, stolen from Billy, that decides you into thinking any kil can get to play Mozart in just a month.

to the "I" who is the voice of the Story. Now this could just be a carefully planned and perfectly respectable case of hysterico-modernist ventriloquistic invogination (in which case the two voices are really the same). But I think the better theory is this: the voice from the blue folder is not the voice of the Story, it is the Story itself (they certainly have the same bad habits: "the Story . . . is commanding, dictatorial, hectoring, and inclined to sulk when it doesn't get its own way"). In this case the "I" is the voice of the Story in the sense of being the *spokesman* for the Story, aka the voice from the blue folder. "I am . . . unpaid secretary to the Story."

What's odd is the size of the fuss. The Story can't support all this fretwork. Perhaps there is a fine irony in that, but the "I" seems to be wasting its time being a "slave" to such a small Story. There are other complications. The voice of the Story writes in a café in Milan and explains the plot to the *padrone* and one of his regulars, Uts, the wife of the Danish consul. Uts and the *padrone* weigh in with comments, emotional reactions and demands for clarification, and Uts—Uts of the "splendid bosom", the "incomparable inflation", the "pneumatic sweaters"—soon becomes indispensable (midwife to the voice). She is large, young, pretty, maternally, conventional and pleasurably severe, and she is blighly censorious of Harry Butler, the woman-tangled Professor of Philosophy, the undeservingly innocent adulterer, the central figure of the Story.

As you can imagine, the voice of the Story starts to need Uts. Not only does he vastly admire her breasts; he also needs her cross-questioning. And when she leaves, the voice from the blue folder simply stops talking to him. And so he follows her from Milano to Rapello, and even to ice-bound Copenhagen. Behind her criticism he thinks he detects affection.

And he is right. But she is wrong. She thinks he is Harry Butler, fleeing his tangles and writing autobiography. And on those grounds she is troublingly drawn to him. But he is not Harry, and says so at the crucial moment. The possibility of their affair dissolves.

He says who he isn't, but not who he is. "Thit will be for you to decide." In fact he is Phil, Harry's best friend in the nut Story (that's my decision). And if so, then the nut Story and the shell story are not distinct after all—the narrator of the shell is part of the nut. And this is certainly a neat collapse. But the sense of disabling oddity still remains—the sense of an excessively large paratextual erection on a very minor foundation. Most of the effect of *The Death of the Body* is lost for want of a big enough nut.



# Ritual and repression

Richard Burghart

WENDY DONIGER O'FLAHERTY  
Tales of Sex and Violence: Folklore, sacrifice and danger in the "Jaininīya Brāhmināna"  
145pp. University of Chicago Press. £14.50.  
0226 618528

It is curious how the sex and violence of a different place and time seem neither very sexy nor very violent to us today. There is a bit of adultery and philandering throughout this book, but the naughty part does not begin until page 101 when Sumitra meets Long-Tongue, a rather extravagantly endowed Vedic demoness. Instead of writing about sex and violence, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty sensibly looks at the feelings which sex and violence engender. It is the legitimacy and control of such feelings – be it by the self, the modern State or the Vedic ritual specialist – that link the modern West with ancient India and enable us to speak across the ages as if we had a common problem.

O'Flaherty's source is the *Jaininīya Brāhmināna*. Since its "discovery" by Indologists in the last century, the *Jaininīya* has played a rather inferior role in the Western record of India's past. Nineteenth-century Indologists were rationalists. They took civilization to mean the development of the arts and sciences; and the search for the origins of civilization focused on those Vedic pursuits which seemed to be the product of a rational mind. The *Jaininīya*, with its emphasis on folk-tales, was at best a collection of "theological and mystical dreams"; at worst the product of a debased imagination. In the estimation of the classicists and anthropologists the *Jaininīya* did not fare any better. Proper myths were charters for rituals. Any myth which did not explain a ritual was considered a mere folk-tale. Of all the *Brāhmināna*s the *Jaininīya* was closest to its folk sources, which is perhaps just another way of saying that it was thought to be an unreliable

guide to the finer points of Brahmanical civilization.

O'Flaherty, however, takes a different tack. The book is subtitled *Folklore, sacrifice and danger in the "Jaininīya Brāhmināna"*; it could also have been subtitled *Freud in ancient India*, for O'Flaherty takes the analyst's couch to her subject area, places it in the sacrificial arena and listens to the priestly tales for signs of Vedic *Angst*. She starts with the fears that arise in experiences beyond personal control. Repressed in waking life, fears come alive in dreams, giving mental content to uncontrollable forces and events. These private dreams are, in turn, transformed into public myths and ritual knowledge. Knowledge of ritual procedures – rather like awareness of the Cruise and Trident missiles of our time – is supposed to give one a sense of personal security, but only serves to heighten one's fear. There is both the danger of incorrect performance and the perpetual threat of being subject to someone else's ritual attacks. Thus rituals reinforce repressed fear, giving rise to secondary myths and technical elaboration. The Brahmanical codes of ritual procedure reveal a world of technical mastery; the myths, however, are symptoms of the troubled mind that produced the rituals. They are the next best thing to a Vedic dream, informing us of the fears that the rituals were designed to overcome.

Having sketched her approach, O'Flaherty takes up the *Jaininīya* tales theme by theme: the fear of death, the fear of god, the fear of father, of wives and of demonic women. The translations are neatly turned. Points of detail are explained, and variant forms in other Vedic texts and in the *Mahābhārata* are noted with just the right level of erudition.

But does her approach work? One returns to the old question – and it is by now rather old – of the universality of the Freudian conception of psychodynamics. O'Flaherty's psychoanalysis is not at all heavy-handed, yet the unresolved problems of interpretation in the Indian context are considerable. Kutsa, born of his father's thigh and resembling his father in

every way, seduces his father's wife. Is this an expression of an incestuous wish or a Vedic anticipation of genetic cloning? Does a man's fear of his wife stem from the repression of sexuality or a seizable distrust of his affines?

Many of the tales have been scripted for Hollywood endings. The protagonists are gripped more by insatiable desires than by uncontrollable fears; and the objects of their desire – victory, cattle and women – are obtained by sacrifice. Of course, one would not expect fears to be textually salient, for they are repressed and in some sense concealed. But concealed from whom? From the ancient Indians or from us? Perhaps most striking to a Western audience is the degree to which the *Jaininīya* expresses sexual violence in its unmasked form; that things that are latent, symbolized by other things, in the West are manifest, symbolized only by themselves, in this text. If sex and violence are not masked does this mean that they are not repressed? O'Flaherty suggests instead that the texts might hide the fear of death. But what is to be

## Brahmin and bandit

Jonathan Parry

DAVID DEAN SHULMAN  
The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry  
447pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.  
£40.90.  
0691 054576

Much has recently been written about the relationship between power and authority in Hindu ideology. Louis Dumont postulated a radical dichotomy between the politico-economic domain of the king (*orika*) and the religious domain of the Brahmin (*dharma*), and found a relationship of hierarchical complementarity between the two. As representative of the ultimate values the priest outranks the king, and it is with a more or less easy conscience that he legitimates the king's power in return for his livelihood. In J. C. Heesterman's picture, however, no such comfortable symbiosis is possible. Transcendent authority resides with the Brahmin; but he is ideally a world renouncer who cannot legitimize the king's power without compromising his own transcendence. The priest who serves the king forfeits in the process the very quality for which the king requires his services. Though in a very different way, Burton Stein's analysis of the medieval South Indian "segmentary" State again draws attention to the gap between power and ritual authority. The king controls the core area of his kingdom by virtue of the force he commands, but can only exercise ritual authority over peripheral areas.

*The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry* explores these general themes as they are elaborated in medieval South Indian literature. The symbolic order depicted remains, David Dean Shulman believes, fundamentally unchanged over the thousand years which separate the Pallavas from the end of the Vijayanagar empire, though the focus is on the Chola period (roughly mid-ninth to late-thirteenth centuries). Contra Dumont, the identities of the king and the Brahmin are shown to interpenetrate. Like Heesterman's, the emphasis is on the profoundly problematic nature of kingship; and, like Stein, Shulman sees the State as confronted by a basic structural weakness – though Stein is criticized for failing to explain why. Actually, Stein had drawn attention to the absence of the technology and mobile force necessary to sustain a unitary State of the modern type; but (presumably because myth and poetry have little to say about the state of the roads) Shulman ignores such mundane considerations, and focuses exclusively on the ideological dimension.

For him, the crux of the problem stems from the fact that the source of transcendent authority is located outside the world in the values of renunciation; which deny the reality of the order over which the king presides. Kingship is therefore "in some sense deeply opposed to the ultimate values of the tradition"; and paradoxically "the only legitimate Hindu ruler is the one who recognizes his essential illegitimacy". Even more ambiguous is the role of the

feared when death is not the absence of life but other worlds where dead people lead their other lives in death?

The conclusion raises more questions than answers, betokening perhaps that the beginning of another book lies in the end of this one. I, at any rate, shall look forward to that near one in the manner of the Puranic student Maitreya, asking Parāśara still more questions.

The second publication sponsored by the Urdu Morkaz, "dedicated to bringing the Urdu heritage to the attention of the English-speaking reading public", is *Urdu Literature* by D. I. Matthews, C. Shackle and Shahrukh Husain (139pp. Third World Foundation for Social and Economic Studies, 13th Floor, New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TS. Paperback, £4.95. 0 907962 30 0). After sketching the background to the language and its literature, the co-authors present the major writers, particularly the poets (with many examples in rhymed and metrical translation), in historical succession.

Brahmin who remains within the world as the representative of values which reject it. Standing on the boundary between the transcendent and mundane orders, he is drawn into the latter to legitimate it, though the ideal he imports with him ends up by subverting it.

In the meantime, however, he acts as a tip for the sins which the king inevitably accumulates in the course of his violent rule – sins which are passed on to the Brahmin along with the gifts with which the king endows him. The need to do so is constant; but how can the king sustain such "generosity"? The solution – no solution at all – is by raiding and violence. Legitimate authority can only be tenuously achieved by renouncing power. Like his counterpart on the chessboard, the *dharma* king is in grave danger of becoming a focal symbol reduced to practical impotence – a recipe for disaster since he cannot then fulfil his obligation to maintain the *dharma*. Caught on the horns of an insoluble dilemma – authority without power; power without authority – myth represents the king as bouncing like a yo-yo between transcendence and total involvement in the world, propelled by aspires of clown-like figures who represent "an institutionalized corrosion of any stability in the royal realm". Sometimes this is the Brahmin, who "brings the boundary into the kingdom's center and informs the state with its ever-unresolved ambiguity"; and sometimes it is the king himself, the juxtaposition of whose different aspects "produces an effect similar to that of the clown's essential incoherence, his intentional jumbling of attributes and actions".

The king is also symbolically allied with that representative of wild, unsanctified power, the bandit. Shulman formulates their relationship in terms of opposition (as the representative of order is opposed to disorder), identity (both share many of the same attributes – above all a basic involvement with the use and abuse of power) and complementarity (the king needs the bandit's coercive power; the bandit needs the king's delegated legitimacy). Sometimes the king reverts to mere banditry; sometimes the bandit becomes king – "an outer force assimilated to the center; [as] the clown is the center emptied out. The two coalesce in the figure of the king."

Those familiar with Heesterman's writings and with some of Shulman's earlier work, will find much of the general argument – if not the specific application and its stress on the complementary identities of the principal protagonists – familiar. The result is nevertheless consistently intriguing and full of illuminating insights, though (to this non-specialist reader at least) finally somewhat frustrating. This is because it is difficult to assess the representativeness of the genre of literature from which Shulman has constructed his picture; or – more importantly – to know what relationship all this ideological agonizing bears to the real world. That the king himself clearly appreciated the impossibility of his problem seems hardly credible in view of the fact that throughout South Indian history he continued to endow the Brahmins on a grand scale. Had he read Shulman he might well have concluded that this was an ultimately futile investment.

# Withholding the missing portion: Power, meaning and persuasion in Freud's 'The Wolf-Man'

Stanley Fish

I was led to this paper by two moments in the proceedings of the 1958 Style in Language Conference; they are moments in which the topic of persuasion is allowed to surface and then is immediately suppressed. The first such moment coincides with the only substantive mention at the conference of Freud. Roger Brown is discussing the resistance of cognitive psychologists to psychoanalytic procedure in which, it is feared, "anything can mean anything".

Brown replies, in apparent defence of psychoanalysis, that one must take into account the fact that its results are often persuasive; and if they are persuasive it must be because psychoanalytic evidence, while not falling obviously into the linear and logical forms with which we are familiar, is nevertheless speaking to the criteria by which we determine validity: presumably at a certain point the accumulation of evidence reaches a level which satisfies those criteria and at that point persuasion occurs.

But if this is an argument that acknowledges persuasion, it also robs it of any independent force. In Brown's account persuasion is simply the name of a mechanism that is triggered when a level of statistical probability has been reached. A persuasion so defined has been thoroughly domesticated and is no longer a threat to the formal projects of linguistics and cognitive psychology.

The second moment at which the conference defends itself against the threat of persuasion occurs at the very end, after the last paper, in a discussion between the participants, a discussion one finds, if one finds it at all, in exceedingly small print. There, hidden from view lest it infect the entire volume, is a brief consideration of rhetoric. The topic is introduced by L.A. Richards, who declares that the questions so often debated at the conference, the questions of value and meaning, are finally rhetorical; it is, he says, a matter of the context of discourse and, as Isoocrates observes, good discourse is discourse that works.

The response is literally terror. C.S. Osgood protests that if the rhetorical view is accepted then even advertising can be thought of as good discourse, in fact as the best discourse; and W.K. Wimsatt adds that if rhetorical standards have any relevance at all, it is only with reference to productions like "the speeches of Hitler during the last war". Confronted with the choice of standing either with Hitler or with W.K. Wimsatt, Richards does the right thing, and in a supremely rhetorical moment withdraws from his defence of rhetoric. "Mr. Wimsatt and I," he says, "are not in disagreement."

I have two epigraphs for this essay. The first is from James Strachey's preface to his translation of Freud's *Introductory Lectures*. Freud, he says, was "never rhetorical", and was entirely opposed to laying down his view in an authoritarian fashion. The second is a report by the Wolf-Man of what he thought to himself shortly after he met Freud for the first time: this man is a Jewish swindler, he wants to use me from behind and shit on my head. This paper is dedicated to the proposition that the Wolf-Man got it right.

was not completely explained". Immediately and without explanation, the explanation came forth: "it must mean: 'my eyes suddenly opened.' I was asleep . . . and suddenly woke up, and as I woke up I saw something: the tree with the wolves." It is important to note that the patient does not say, "Now I remember", but rather, "It must mean." His is not an act of recollection, but of construction. The question I would ask – and it is a question that will take us far – is what is the content of "must"? What compels him to this particular interpretation among all those he might have hit upon? To this Freud's answer is "nothing", at least nothing external to the patient's own efforts. For a long time, he tells us, his young charge "remained . . . entrenched behind an attitude of obliging apathy"; he refused, that is, to "take an independent share in the work". Clearly Freud is here not only characterizing his patient; he is also providing us with a scenario of the analysis in which both his and

patient's resistance gave way, and now in a disproportionately short time, the analysis produced all the material which made it possible to clear up his inhibitions and remove his symptoms." Here the analysis is presented as if it were independent of the constraints (that father it, and at the end of the sentence the clearing up of inhibitions and the removal of symptoms appear as effects without a cause, a natural phenomenon that simply emerges in the course of their own time, the time, presumably, when the patient suddenly, and of his own accord, exclaims, "it must mean . . .").

It is a remarkable sequence, and one that is repeated in a variety of ways in the paragraphs that follow. Always the pattern is the same: the claim of independence – for the analysis, for the patient's share, for the "materials" – is made in the context of an account that powerfully subverts it, and then it is made again. The question that arises is one of motive. Why is Freud doing this? Is it a mutter, simply, of a

denial by producing accounts of the analysis in which the actions he is unwilling to acknowledge are performed by others. The first such displacement occurs in the third paragraph of Chapter One of "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" (the Wolf-Man case history), when he weighs the virtues and defects of competing methodologies. The two possibilities are (1) analysing a childhood disorder when it first manifests itself in infancy, or (2) waiting until the patient is an "intellectually mature adult". Since Freud is at this very moment engaged in the second practice it is not surprising that he decides in favour of it, but he must find a way to defend it against the objection (which he anticipates) that because of the passage of time what results will be the product of interpretation. He replies by asserting that interpretation will play an even greater part if the child is examined directly because "too many words and thoughts have to be lent" to him. In contrast, when one analyses an adult, these "limitations" do not obtain, although one must then "take into account the distortion and re-fabricating to which a patient's past is subjected when it is lunked back upon".

Once one begins to examine it, this is a curious contrast, since it is hard to tell the difference between "lending words" and "re-fabricating". What makes the contrast work is the fact that the sentence shifts the burden of "re-fabricating" on to the patient. It is a brilliant move which allows Freud to admit interpretation into the scene while identifying it as the work of another, leaving himself the (humane) work of undoing its effects. In only a few brief sentences, he has managed to twice distance himself from the charge of suggestion, first by pushing it off on to the practitioners of a rival method, and second by making it into a property of the illness of which his now innocent labours are to be the cure.

The strategy then is to foreground an accusation and to defend against it by turning it back on those who would make it; attribute to others what they would attribute unto you; allow the accusation to surface, but keep pushing it away. In another place it is pushed away before it appears because it is presented as an accusation not against Freud but against his patients, including, presumably, this one. The accusers are his opponents, Jung and Adler, who reject the thesis of infantile neurosis, regarding it as an elaborate rationalization that allows neurotics to avoid confronting their problems by projecting them on to a past for which they can then not be held responsible. "The supporters of this view," says Freud, "assume that the importance of childhood is only belied up before our eyes in analysis on account of the inclination of neurotics for expressing their present interests in reminiscences and symbols from the remote past." In short, they deny the very reality of infantile neurosis.

To this Freud replies not directly, but by means of the vocabulary with which he repeatedly characterizes these nay-sayers. He says of them that they unthinkingly reject what is new, clinging obstinately to comfortable interpretations, and turn their back on the unmistakable evidence brought forward by psychoanalysis. But these are also the terms in which he describes the behaviour of infantile neurotics like his patient, whose illness is thereby validated when evidence of it is discovered in the actions of those who would dispute it. In this way the thesis of infantile neurosis is not once defended against its detractors and made into a weapon with which to club them, as the conditions of being an infantile neurotic and of being an opponent of Freud turn out to be one and the same. It is a master-stroke which accomplishes several things at once: whatever Freud's opponents might say about his handling of the present case is discredited in advance, because they are too much like his subject; and, more importantly, Freud's reader is simultaneously introduced to the opinions of those opponents and inoculated against their effect; for he is given what appears to be a choice, but is in fact on offer he can't refuse: you can either accept what I am about to tell you or you can look forward to being stigmatized as a resistant and recalcitrant infant. Either cast your lot with me or with those bad



Benton Murdoch Spruance's lithograph "Reclining Nude with Flowers", about 1948, is reproduced from *The Prints of Benton Murdoch Spruance: A catalogue raisonné* by Ruth E. Fine and Robert F. Looney (340pp. University of Pennsylvania Press. \$49.50. 0 8122 8004 0).

the patient's roles are carefully specified: the analyst waits patiently for the patient to begin to work on his own and suddenly "one day" his patience is rewarded, when the patient declares, "It must mean . . .".

There is, however, another scenario embedded in this same paragraph, and it is considerably less benign: the full sentence in which one finds the phrase "independent share in the work" reads as follows: "It required a long education to persuade and induce him to take an independent share in the work." The sentence obviously divided against itself, one half proclaiming an independence which in the other half is compromised when it is identified as the product of persuasion and force. That independence is further compromised when Freud reveals the method by which it has been "induced". At the moment when he saw that the patient's attachment to him had become strong enough to counterbalance his resistance, he announced that "the treatment must be brought to an end at a particular fixed date, no matter how far it had advanced". As it is delivered, the announcement would seem to indicate that Freud doesn't care whether or not "advancement" will occur, but in fact it is a device for assuring advancement, and for assuring it in a form he will approve. What Freud says is "do as you like, it makes no difference to me". What he means is, "If you do not do as I like and do it at the time I specify, you will lose the satisfaction of pleasing me to whom I know you to be attached by the strongest of bonds because I forged them".

The coercion could not be more obvious and Freud does not shrink from naming it as an exercise of "inexorable pressure"; yet in the very same sentence he coopts to detach the pressure from the result it produces: "Under the inexorable pressure of the fixed limit [the

desire for personal power? The text suggests that he would reply in the negative and say that he was only defending the honour of psychoanalysis against what John Wisdom has identified as the oldest charge against it, the charge that it "acts by suggestion", that what the analyst claims to uncover (in the archetypal case of which Freud was so fond) he actually creates by verbal and rhetorical means.

Freud is vehement in his rejection of this accusation, declaring at one point that "It is unjust to attribute the results of analysis to the physician's imagination" and confessing at another that he finds it "impossible" even to argue with those who regard the findings of psychoanalysis as "artefacts". These and similar statements would seem to suggest that his motives are not personal, but institutional; he speaks not for himself, but on behalf of the integrity of a discipline. But the discipline is one of which he is quite literally the father, and his defence of its integrity involves him in the same contradiction that marks his relationship with the patient and the reader: no sooner has he insisted on the independence of psychoanalysis as a science than he feels compelled to specify, and to specify authoritatively, what the nature of that science is; and once he does that he is in the untenable position of insisting on the autonomy of something of which he is unable to let go. By rising to the institutional level Freud only re-inscribes the dilemma inherent in his role as analyst and author. He cannot be both liberator and master at the same time; and in so far as that is the task he assigns himself he becomes the object of his own manipulation, demanding of himself, as he demands of the patient and the reader, that he be active and passive at the same time.

Freud's response to this double bind is to

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children who are so sick that they do not even recognize their illness.

## II

Those of you who know the text may already have realized that up to this point I have been dealing only with the very brief first chapter and the opening paragraph of Chapter Two, some five pages out of a total of more than 100. And yet in a sense, most of the work has already been done, for although we have yet to hear a single detail either of the patient's history or of his therapy, we are already so much under Freud's influence that when the details finally do appear, they will fall into the places he has prepared for them. Although Freud will repeatedly urge us in the following pages to take up our "independent share" in the work, that independence has long since been taken from us. The judgment he will soon solicit is a judgment he already controls, and as he begins his narration proper, he increases that control by dictating the terms by which his efforts (or as he would have it, non-efforts) will be judged. "I am unable", he says, "to give either a purely historical or a purely thematic account of my patient's story; I can write a history neither of the treatment nor of the illness, but I shall find myself obliged to combine the two methods of presentation." A "purely historical" account would be a narrative account tracing unit relationships of cause and effect; and by declaring that he is unable to provide it, Freud releases himself from the requirement that in his explanations one thing be shown to follow from another. A "purely thematic" account would be one in which the coherence of events and details was a matter of their relationship to a single master theme; and by declaring that he is unable to provide it, Freud releases himself from the requirement that his explanations go together to form a unified whole. In effect he neutralizes criticism of his conclusions before they are offered and is in the enviable position of being at once the architect and judge of his own performance.

The crowning (and typical) touch is the word "obliged" ("I shall find myself obliged"), for it allows him to present himself as operating under the severest of constraints just at the moment when he is fashioning the constraints under which and within which both his patient and his reader will labour. What obliges him, it

turns out, is the nature of the unconscious, which, he tells us, is not a linear structure ruled by the law of contradiction, but a geological accumulation of forms that never completely disappear and live side by side in an uneasy and unpredictable vacillation:

That there should be an instantaneous and clear-cut displacement of one phase by the next was not in the nature of things or of our patient; on the contrary, the preservation of all that had gone before and the co-existence of the most different sorts of currents were characteristic of him.

This picture of the unconscious is offered as if it provided independent support of both his thesis and his procedure; but it is his thesis, and it is indistinguishable from the argument it authorizes. That is, the unconscious is not a concept but a rhetorical device, a place holder which can be given whatever shape the polemical moment requires. If someone were to object to his interpretation of a particular detail, he could point for confirmation to the nature of the unconscious, and, if someone were to dispute the nature of the unconscious, he could point to the evidence of his interpretations; and all the while he could speak of himself as being "obliged" by constraints that were not once independent of him and assured the independence from him of his patient and his reader. The rhetorical situation could not be more favourable. Freud can present himself as a disinterested researcher and at the same time work to extend his control until it finally includes everything, the details of the analysis, the behaviour of the patient and the performance of the reader; and he manages to do all of this before the story of the Wolf-Man has even begun to unfold.

I am aware that this is not the usual description of Freud's labours, which have recently been characterized by Peter Brooks in *Reading for the Plot* (1984) as "heroic", a characterization first offered by Freud in 1938 as he cast a final retrospective look at his most famous case. In Brooks's reading the Wolf-Man is a "radically modernist" text, a "structure of indeterminacy" and "undeidability" which "perilously destabilizes belief in . . . exhaustive accounts whose authority derives from the force of closure". Freud's heroism, according to Brooks, consists precisely in resisting closure, in forgoing the satisfaction of crafting a "coherent, finished, enclosed, and authoritative narrative".

This is an attractive thesis, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the text we have been reading, although, as we shall see, Brooks has reasons, and apparently good ones, for thinking as he does. Meanwhile we can note that Freud's own characterization of his narrative insists precisely on those qualities Brooks would deny to it: completeness, exhaustiveness, authority, and above all, closure. The requirement that he expects his presentation to meet is forthrightly stated in a footnote as he begins to interpret the wolf dream: "It is always a strict law of dream-interpretation that an explanation must be found for every detail". This is the vocabulary not of any "post-modernist narrative" or "structure of indeterminacy", but of a more traditional and familiar genre — one of which we know Freud to have been very fond — the classic story of detection; a genre in which an absolutely omniscient author distributes clues to a master meaning of which he is fully cognizant and toward which the reader moves uncertainly, but always under the direction of a guide who builds the structure of the narrative and the structure of understanding at the same time.

There is, however, a large difference between Freud's detective story and other instances of the genre; in the novels of Conan Doyle or Agatha Christie, author and reader are engaged in a contest in which they are armed with the same weapon, their ability to reason along lines of cause and effect; but these are precisely the lines that Freud has told us he will not pursue, and as a result the reader comes to his tasks with a double disability: not only must he look to Freud for the material on which his intelligence is to work; he must also be supplied with a way of making that material intelligible. And of course it will be Freud who supplies him, and who by supplying him will immeasurably increase the control he already exercises. Not only will he monitor the flow of information and point to the object that is to be understood; he will stipulate the form in which the act of understanding will be allowed to occur.

That is the business of Chapter Three, "The Seduction and Its Immediate Consequences". The seduction in question is (or appears to be) the seduction of the Wolf-Man by his sister. The occasion is a succession of dreams "concerned with aggressive actions on the boy's part against his sister or against the governess".

For a while, Freud reports, a firm interpretation of these dreams seemed unavailable. Then "the explanation came at a single blow when the patient suddenly called to mind the fact that when he was still very small . . . his sister had seduced him into sexual practices". What happens next is a bit of sleight-of-hand: first of all, the patient's recollection is not an explanation, which therefore does not count as a single blow (at least not at the single blow which the reader's attention is directed). Rather, the explanation emerges as the result of interpretative work done by Freud, but not seen by us; the "single blow" in other words occurs off-stage and what we are presented with is its result, offered as if it were self-evident and self-generating. These dreams, Freud says, "were meant to efface the memory of an event which later on seemed offensive to the patient's masculine self-esteem, and he reached this end by putting an imaginary and desirable converse in the place of the historical truth". That is to say, the patient's masculine self-esteem was threatened by the fact that his sister, not he, was the aggressive seducer; this threat is defended against in the dream material by reversing their respective positions. One critic has objected to this as Freud's "apparently arbitrary invention", but it is far from arbitrary, for it is in effect a precise and concise direction to both the patient and the reader, providing them with a method of dealing with the material they will soon meet and telling them in advance what will result when that method is applied: "If you want to know what something — a dream, a piece of neurotic behaviour — means, simply reverse its apparent significance, and what you will find is an attempt to preserve masculine self-esteem against the threat of passivity and femininity". The real seduction in this chapter (which is accomplished at this moment and in a single blow) is the seduction not of the patient by his sister, but of both the patient and the reader by Freud, who will now be able to produce interpretative conclusions in the confidence that they will be accepted as the conclusions of an inevitable and independent logic.

Moreover, in performing this act of seduction, Freud at once redoubles and reverses his behaviour: he explains: if the patient defied against his passivity by "weaving an imaginative composition" in which he is the aggressor, Freud defends against his own aggression by

weaving an imaginative composition in which he is passive; and if it is the case, as Freud will later argue, that the patient is ambivalent and conflicted — at a level below consciousness he wants to be both passive and aggressive — it is no less the case with Freud who wants to be the father of everything that happens in the analysis and at the same time wants the analysis to unfold of its own accord.

One is tempted then to say that the story Freud tells is doubled by the story of the telling, or that his performance mirrors or enacts the content of the analysis. But in fact it is the other way around; the content of the analysis mirrors or enacts the drama of the performance, a drama that is already playing itself out long before it has anything outside itself to be "about", and playing itself out in the very terms that are here revealed supposedly for the first time, the terms of the preservation and concealing of masculine self-esteem and aggression. What Freud presents as mere preliminary material — his prospective discussion of evidence, conviction and independence — is finally the material that is being worked through even when the focus has ostensibly shifted elsewhere, to the patient and his infantile pre-history. The real story of the case is the story of persuasion, and we will be able to read it only when we tear our eyes away from the supposedly deeper story of the boy who had a dream.

Both stories receive their fullest telling in Chapter Four, which begins as this paper begins: "I dreamt that it was night and I was lying in my bed." Here finally is the centrepiece of the case, withheld from the reader for three chapters, and now represented as the chief object of interpretation. But of course, it appears as an already interpreted object, even before the first word has been said about it, since we know in advance that whatever configuration emerges need only be reversed for its "true" meaning to be revealed; and, lest we forget what we have been taught, Freud reinforces the lesson with a pointed speculation. "We must naturally expect", he says, "to find

that the dream material reproduces the unknown material of some previous scene in some distorted form, perhaps even distorted into its opposite". He then reports, as if it were uninfluenced by his expectations, the moment when the patient takes up his "independent share in the work". When in my dream the window suddenly opened of its own accord, "It must mean 'my eyes suddenly opened'." Indeed it must, given the interpretative directions he has received, and it is hardly surprising to hear Freud's response: "No objection could be made to this." To be sure, there could be no objection to a meaning he has virtually commanded, and in what follows the pretence that the work is independent is abandoned. "The point", he says, "could be developed further", and he immediately proceeds to develop it, not bothering even to indicate whether the development issues from him or from his patient:

What then if the other factor emphasized by the dreamer were also distorted by means of a transposition or reversal? In that case instead of immobility (the wolves sat there motionless) . . . the meaning would have to be: the most violent emotion. . . . He suddenly woke up, and saw in front of him a scene of violent movement at which he looked with strained attention.

There remains only the final step of determining what the scene of violent motion precisely was, but before taking that step Freud pauses in a way that heightens its drama. "I have now reached the point", he says, "at which I must abandon the support I have hitherto had from the course of the analysis. I am afraid it will also be the point at which the reader's belief will abandon me."

Presumably it is because of gestures like this one that Brooks is moved to characterize Freud's text as open and non-authoritative; but I trust that my reader will immediately see this as the gesture of someone who is so confident of his authority that he can increase it by (apparently) questioning it. We can hardly take seriously the fear that he will be abandoned by the reader's belief, since that belief — our belief — rather than being independent of his will, is by now the child of his will, accepting

as evidence only what he certifies. A abandon him? To abandon him at this point would be to abandon the constraints and desires that make us, as readers, what we are. By raising the possibility Freud only tightens the bonds by which we are attached to him, and makes us all the more eager to receive the key revelation at his hands. I give it to you now:

What sprang into activity that night out of the chaos of the dreamer's unconscious memory traces was the picture of copulation between his parents, copulation in circumstances which were not entirely usual and were especially available for observation.

The credibility of this revelation is not a function of its probability — we have had many demonstrations of how improbable it is that any such event ever took place — but of its explanatory power. It satisfies the need Freud has created in us to understand, and by understanding to become his partner in the construction of the story. As at so many places in the text, what Freud presents here for our judgment is quite literally irresistible: for resistance would require an independence we have already surrendered. In return for that independence we are given the opportunity in nod in agreement — to say, "It must mean" — as Freud, newly constructed primal scene in hand, solves every puzzle the case had seemed to offer. In rapid order he accounts for the patient's fear of wolves, his fantasies of beating and being beaten, his simultaneous identification with and rejection of his father, his marked castration anxiety:

His anxiety was a reproduction of the wish for sexual satisfaction from his father . . . The form taken by the anxiety, the fear of "being eaten by the wolf", was only the . . . transposition of the wish to be copulated with by his father . . . His first sexual aim, the passive attitude towards his father, succumbed to repression, and fear of his father appeared in its place in the shape of the wolf phobia. And the driving force of this repression? . . . it can only have been his narcissistic genital libido, which . . . was fighting against a satisfaction whose attainment seemed to involve the renunciation of that organ.

What we have here is a picture of someone who

alternates between passive and aggressive behaviour, now assuming the dominant position of the male aggressor, now submitting in feminine fashion to forces that overwhelm him. This, we are told, is the secret content of the patient's behaviour, expressed indirectly in his symptoms and phantasies, and brought triumphantly by Freud to the light of day. But if it is a secret, the drama of its disclosing serves to deflect our attention from a secret deeper still, the secret that has (paradoxically) been on display since the opening paragraphs. Once more Freud contrives to keep that secret by publishing it, by discovering at the heart of the patient's phantasy the very conflicts that he himself has been acting out in his relationships with the patient, the analysis, the reader, and his critics. In all of these relationships he is driven by the abstractions he uncovers, by the continual need to control, to convince, and to seduce, in endless vacillation with the equally powerful need to disclaim any trace of influence, and to present himself as the passive conduit of forces that exist independently of him. He simply cannot help himself, and even when his double story is fully told, he has recourse to a mechanism that opens it again, not, as Brooks would have it, in order to deny or defeat closure, but in order to repeat it, and thereby to master again.

## III

The mechanism is the announcement that he has omitted a detail from the reconstruction of the primal scene. "Lastly", Freud tells us, the boy "interrupted his parents' intercourse in a manner which will be discussed later". This is the missing portion of my title, and by calling attention to it, Freud produces a desire for its restoration, a desire he then periodically inflames by reminding us of the deficiency in our understanding and promising to supply it. "I have hinted", he says in Chapter Five, "that my description of the primal scene has remained incomplete because I have reserved for a later moment my account of the way in which the

## The Dancing Hippo

In my country we are not good to animals. A dog is a dog, however it might sit up and beg, or run through fire; and a bear riding a bicycle still wants to eat you. I think you can see from my lack of illusion I have some experience — so when I tell you this story caused me distress, do not ignore me.

It's difficult, teaching a hippo to dance. It takes for ever. They don't grow on trees, and buying one meant that our modest circus made do with a mothy lion for an extra year, and sold two singing seals. Then when she arrived, our hippo, she ate like a creature possessed — and the shitting! Continual diarrhoea, and her tail dithering frantically, spraying it everywhere. I have to admit, I wanted her sold at once — or turned into curlo waste-paper baskets.

But Nicolai reckoned she'd learn. Day after day, and sometimes night after night, we'd hear the waltz from the Sugar Plum Fairy (with whip obbligato) twittering out of his tent, and *Move!* *Move!* while he hopped around on the straw as if it were burning his feet. A hippo able to judge, would have certainly thought he was mad; so it may, I suppose, have been pity that led her to copy him: a ponderous sideways prance, a shuffling reverse, and a massive, triumphant collapse (her curtsy). Or that's what it looked like, at least, the first time she danced for the public — on a summer night in some one-horse place

we found by chance in the foothills, with warm, mosquitoey, hop-smelling air blowing in under the rolled-up flaps, and the people caught in our spotlight transfixed by the prance, reverse and collapse that we thought was nothing but seemed to them like a prodigy.

Maybe it was. For sure everyone loved her, even when summer was over, and we returned to perform in our permanent home, in the capital, where they are used to marvels. On opening night under the stars in the park, she excelled herself in front of the President, rising at one time (I think) on her chubby back legs for a second. Afterwards Nicolai said she was not for this world for long — and although he was right, his philosophy wasn't enough to prevent the fire that burst through her pen one night in the early new year, and burnt her to death, from breaking his heart.

We live in a country where animals count for little, as I have said. But I remember him stumbling into my van after the flames were doused, and the huge carcass had gone wherever it went, gripping my arm, leaping close to my face in the yellow glare of my rickety kerosene lamp, and saying *I know it was useless, of course, her dancing. I know. Like everything else we do. But God above it was beautiful. God!* — or something like that.

ANDREW MOTION

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child interrupted his parents' intercourse. I must now add that this method of interruption is the same in every case." Again he leaves us without the crucial piece of information and by suggesting that it is even more valuable than we had thought - it is a key not only to this case, but to all cases - he intensifies our need for it. Moreover, in a manner entirely characteristic, he then shifts that need on to the patient who is described in the following chapter as "longing for someone who should give him the last pieces of information that were still missing upon the riddle of sexual intercourse". The displacement is transparent: it is of course we who are longing for a piece of information to be given us by a father with whom we will then join. Once again the drama of Freud's rhetorical mastery is at once foregrounded and concealed when it appears, only thinly disguised, as an event in his patient's history.

This technique of open concealment reaches a virtuoso level of performance when, in a gesture of excessive candour, Freud reveals that there is a subject he has "intentionally . . . left to one side". He then introduces us a new topic of discussion a term that names the very behaviour he has been engaging in all the while, anal eroticism. Of course, as he presents it, it is an aspect only of the patient's behaviour, easily discernible, says Freud, in his inability to evacuate spontaneously without the aid of enemas, his habit of "making a mess in his bed", whenever he was forced to share a bedroom with a despised governess, his great fear of dysentery, his fierce piety which alternated with phantasies of Christ defeating, and above all his attitude towards money, with which he was sometimes exceedingly liberal, and at other times miserly in the extreme. All of this Freud relates to the management of "excretory pleasure", which he says plays "an extraordinarily important part . . . in building up sexual life and mental activity". Of course he offers this as an observation about others, evidence (if it is evidence at all) only of his perspicacity. "At last!", he tells us, "I recognized the importance of the intestinal trouble for my purposes", but as we shall see, he says this without any recognition whatsoever of what his real purposes are. His announced purpose is to find a way of overcoming the patient's resistance. For a long time, the analysis was blocked by the Wolf-Man's doubt. He remained sceptical of the efficacy of psychoanalysis and it seemed that there "was no way of convincing him" until

I promised the patient a complete recovery of his intestinal activity, and by means of this promise made his incredulity manifest. I then had the satisfaction of seeing his doubt dwindle away, as in the course of the work his bowel began, like a hysterically affected organ, to "join in the conversation", and in a few weeks' time recovered its normal function.

One might describe this remarkable passage as an allegory of persuasion were it not so transparently literal. One persuades, in this account, by emptying the other of his "pre-existing convictions". The patient's doubts, or to speak more affirmatively, his beliefs, are quite literally eliminated; the fragmentary portions that comprise his convictions pass out through his bowel and he is left an empty vessel, ready to be filled up with whatever new convictions the rhetorician brings forward. (It is no accident that the German word "Klären" means both to explain and to defecate: one must be emptied out before one can be filled up.) The bowel that is said to "join in the conversation" is in fact the medium of the analyst's ventriloquism; it speaks, but the words are his. So is the satisfaction, as Freud explicitly acknowledges ("I then had the satisfaction"): the managing of "excretory pleasure", the misprising of the patient's psychic life, is taken over by the analyst, who gives up nothing while forcing the other to give up everything. And even as Freud reveals and reveals in his strategy, he conceals it, telling the story of persuasion to a reader who is himself that story's object, and who, no less than the patient, is falling totally under the control of the teller.

All of these stories come together at the moment when the missing portion is finally put into place. "I have already hinted", says Freud (in fact he has already already hinted), "that one portion of the primal scene has been kept back." In the original German the sentence is

continued in a relative clause whose literal translation is "which I am now able to offer as a supplement". Strachey makes the clause into an independent unit and renders it "I am now in a position to produce this missing portion." It would seem that this is one of those departures from the text for which the translator has been so often taken to task; but in fact Strachey is here being more literal than Freud himself; rather than departing from the text, he eliminates its coyness and brings us closer to the nature of the act the prose performs, an act to which Strachey alerts us by the insistent physicality of the words "positien" and "produce".

Just what that position and production are becomes dazzlingly clear when the secret is finally out in the open: "The child . . . interrupted his parents' intercourse by passing a stool." We commit the fallacy of imitative form by pointing out what hardly needs pointing out, that Freud enacts precisely what he reports; the position he is in is the squatting position of defecation and it is he who, at a crucial juncture and to dramatic effect, passes a stool that he has long held back. What is even more remarkable is that immediately after engaging in this behaviour, Freud produces (almost as another piece of stool) an analysis of it. In anal-erotic behaviour, he tells us, a person sacrifices or makes a gift of "a portion of his own body which he is ready to part with, but only for the sake of someone he loves". That love, however, is a form of possession or mastery, for in this pregenital phase, the "contrast between 'masculine' and 'feminine' plays no part" and "its place is taken by the contrast between 'active' and 'passive'". What appears to us as masculine in the activities of this phase . . . turns out to be an expression of an instinct for mastery" (*Introductory Lectures*). In other words, one who is fixed in the anal phase experiences pleasure as control, a control he achieves by the calculated withholding and releasing of faeces. What the anal-erotic seeks is to capture and absorb the other by the stimulation and gratifying of desire; what he seeks, in short, is power, and he gains it at the moment when his excretions become the focus and even the content of the other's attention.

However accurate this is as an account of anal-eroticism, it is a perfect account of the act of persuasion; which is, I would argue, the primal act for which the anal-erotic is only a metaphor. It is persuasion that Freud has been practising in this case on a massive scale, and the "instinct for mastery" of which persuasion is the expression finds its fulfilment here when the reader accepts from Freud that piece of deferred information which completes the structure of his own understanding. Once that acceptance has been made, the reader belongs to Freud as much as any lover belongs to the beloved. By giving up a portion of himself Freud is not diminished but enlarged, since what he gets back is the surrender of the reader's will, which now becomes an extension of his own. The reader on his part receives a moment of pleasure - the pleasure of seeing the pieces of the puzzle finally fitting together; but Freud reserves to himself the much greater pleasure of total mastery. It is a pleasure that is intensely erotic, full of the "sexual excitement" that is said to mark the patient's passing of a stool; it is a pleasure that is anal, phallic and even oral, affording the multiple satisfactions of domination, penetration and engulfment. It is, in a word, the pleasure of persuasion.

In what remains of his performance Freud savours that pleasure and adds to it by placing it in apparent jeopardy. It is late in Chapter Eight when he declares "I will make a final attempt at re-interpreting the . . . finding of this analysis in accordance with the scheme of my opponents." One might characterize this as a demonstration of openness were it not so obviously a demonstration of control. Freud is seizing an occasion to perform a rhetorical feat whose value lies (to borrow a phrase from gymnastics) in its degree of difficulty. (This is an old rhetorical tradition that goes back at least as far as the exercises of Seneca.) First he imagines what Jung and Adler would say if they were presented with the materials he has now marshalled; he imagines them as "bad" readers, readers who are unconvinced, and he rehearses their likely objections. No doubt they would regard the primal scene as the invention of a obscurio who was seeking to

rationalize his "flight from the world" and who was "driven to embark on this long backward course either because he had come up against some task . . . which he was too lazy to perform, or because he had every reason to be aware of his own inferiority and thought he could best protect himself . . . by elaborating such contrivances as these". What Freud is staging here is a moment of scrupulosity, very much like some earlier moments when he presses interpretative suggestions on a resistant patient, and then points to the patient's resistance as a proof of the independence of the analysis. Here it is we who are (once more) in the position of the patient as Freud urges on us an interpretative direction and waits for us to reject it "of our own accord"; but of course at this late stage, any rejection we might perform would be dictated not by an independent judgment, but by a judgment Freud has in large measure shaped. Even so, he is unwilling to run the risk (really no risk at all) that we might respond in some errant way, and accordingly he responds for us:

All this would be very nice, if only the unlucky wreath had not had a dream when he was no more than four years old, which signalled the beginning of his neurosis . . . and the interpretation of which necessitates the assumption of this primal scene. All the allegations which the theories of Jung and Adler seek to afford us come to grief, alas, upon such paltry but unimpeachable facts as these.

Everything happens so fast in this sequence that we may not notice that the "unimpeachable fact" which anchors it is the assumption of the primal scene. In most arguments assumptions are what must be proved, but in this argument the assumption is offered as proof, and what supports it is not any independent fact, but the polemical fact that without the assumption the story Freud has so laboriously constructed falls apart. In effect Freud says to us, "look, we've worked incredibly hard to put something together; are we now going to entertain doubts about the very assumption that enabled us to succeed?" The necessity Freud invokes here is a narrative necessity. The primal scene is important because it allows the story of its own discovery to unfold. In that story - the story, basically, of the analysis - the wolf dream comes first and initiates a search for its origin; that search then leads to the "uncovering" of the primal scene, and although it is the last thing to be put in place, it immediately becomes the anchor and the explanation of everything that precedes it. What Freud is relying on here is not something newly or additionally persuasive, but on the fact that persuasion has occurred, and, it having occurred, that we will be unwilling and indeed unable to undo it.

It is the definition of a rhetorical object that it is entirely constructed and stands without external support; it is, we are accustomed to say, removed from reality; but we could just as well say that it becomes reality, that in so far as it has been installed at the centre of a structure of conviction it acquires the status of that which goes without saying and that against which nothing can be said. It then becomes possible to argue both for and from it at the same time; or, rather, it becomes possible to not argue at all, but merely to point to something that now stands as irrefutable evidence of itself, as something perspicacious, autonomous and independent, as something that need not be defended or even presented, as something beyond rhetoric. That is what Freud does here when the imagined objections to the primal scene are met simply by invoking it as a self-evident and indisputable authority. One might say then that at the conclusion of the case history the primal scene emerges triumphant as both the end of the story and its self-authenticating origin; but what is really triumphant is not this particular scene, which after all might well have assumed a quite different shape if the analysis had taken the slightest of turns, but the discursive power of which and by which it has been constructed. The true content of the primal scene is the story of its making. At bottom the primal scene is the scene of persuasion.

## IV

Now if at bottom the primal scene is the scene of persuasion, then the one thing you cannot do in relation to persuasion is get to the bottom

of it; for as the bottom er bottom line, it underwrites everything, including whatever effort one might make either to elude it or achieve distance from it. Being persuasive, assuming the stance of a rhetorician, is not something you can choose to avoid; it is not something you can choose at all; nor is it something you can know in the sense of watching or catching yourself in the act. This brings me finally to several questions many of you will have been asking. To what extent does Freud know what he is doing? Does he know that he is being rhetorical?

On one level the answer is "Of course", and for evidence we need go no further than the first of the *Introductory Lectures* which begins by Freud announcing to his audience that he is about to treat them as if they were neurotic patients; later in the same lecture, he declares that all arguments, even those whose claim is to be rational and disinterested, "arise from affective sources", and, moreover, it could hardly be otherwise since it is "inherent in human nature" to identify what one likes with what one takes to be true. It follows then that, whether one speaks or listens, the meanings that result will always have their source in some affective disposition. And then, immediately, after having made these points, Freud turns around to say that "We, however, Ladies and Gentlemen, can claim that . . . we have a tendentious aim in view. Our intention has been solely to give recognition to the facts as we found them in the course of painstaking researches."

At the very least we would seem to have a disjunction between Freud's general account of human nature and the claims he makes for his own assertions. The general account says that all knowledge is ultimately rhetorical ("arises from affective sources"); the claim he makes for his own assertions is that they are not rhetorical, but true. But were we to fault him for that claim and accuse him of bad faith we would be committing a deep philosophical mistake, the mistake of thinking that our convictions can and should be shaken by the knowledge that they are unsupported by anything external to themselves. It is a mistake because an awareness that the foundations we rest on are mutable and variable does not, in a moment of particular judgment, make those foundations any less ours or make us any less theirs. Whenever we are asked to state what we take to be the case about this or that we will always respond in the context of what seems to us at the time to be indisputably true, even if we know, as a general truth, that everything can be disputed. One who has learned the lesson of rhetoric does not thereby escape the condition it names. The fact that Freud laid bare the rhetorical basis of all convictions does not protect him from the appeal and power of his own. There is finally no contradiction here, only a look of relationship between a truth one might know about discourse in general - that it is ungrounded - and the particular truths to which one is temporally committed and concerning which one can have no doubts. One more we come round to the deep point: that the case of the Wolf-Man allows us to make: the rhetorical and constructed nature of things does not compromise their reality, but constitutes it, and constitutes it in a form that is as invulnerable to challenge as it is unavailable to verification. Like his patient, Freud can only know what he knows within the rhetoric that possesses him, and he cannot be criticized for clinging to that knowledge even when he himself could demonstrate that it is without any extra-discursive foundation. At times in this essay I have spoken as if Freud ought to have been aware that his reading had its source in his deepest anxieties; but it now should be clear that this is an awareness he could not possibly achieve, since, by the arguments of psychoanalysis itself, every operation of the mind, including the operation we might want to call awareness, issues from these same anxieties. The thesis of psychoanalysis is that one can and get to the side of the unconscious; the thesis of this essay is that one cannot get to the side of rhetoric. These two theses are one and the same.

This is an abbreviated version of a paper presented at the "Linguistics of Writing" colloquium of the University of Strathclyde in July.

# Letters

## Aspects of Copyright

Sir, - Jon Stallworthy (Letters, August 15) calls himself my friend, but first he was my editor at Oxford University Press. Although he now seems to regard my critical work on Owen with contempt it is hard to square this with the esteem he then expressed for it as found in his *Out of Battle* (1972). As early as 1969 he sent me an offprint of an article he published in the *Critical Quarterly* (Autumn 1969), "W. B. Yeats and Wilfred Owen", with the inscription "For Jon who knows more about Wilfred Owen than I do". It is one of my minor treasures. I cannot think my work on Owen is so different in character now from what it was then. It is Dominic Hibberd who has, as far as I can ascertain, always objected to it, and who first initiated disagreement by using his British Council monograph on Owen to do so (according to Hibberd I am a wicked socialist intruding, without justification, my political views on to Owen's poetry).

Stallworthy will have to accept that, although I consider myself a fairly "experienced editor" (his ascription) with respect to a critical approach to others' poetry, I do not consider myself to be an experienced desk-editor. Yes, I was under the misapprehension that fifty years after his death the death was the extent of "it" limitation, and that provided I went to the British Library (which I did) and perused the Owen MSS there, my own conclusions would be valid. If they tie in with some of Stallworthy's, what of it? His versions tie in (in some cases erroneously) with those of editors who have preceded him.

Yes, through ignorance I infringed, in the case of a few poems and variants, not in the main Stallworthy's but Day Lewis's 1963 edition of Owen's poems. That is the extent of the "black" area.

But there is also a "grey" area, and it involves the question of ownership and who is entitled to give or refuse permission. That is what is now being debated. I believe that any editor ("experienced") should be permitted to edit Owen's poems from manuscript - the majority of which poems are in the British Library - without first obtaining permission from Stallworthy or any other Trustee of the Owen Estate; and I believe that should also be permitted to publish their findings. I cannot believe that semicolons and commas can be copyrighted, even assuming that Stallworthy's findings and mine always coincide, which they do not. Stallworthy may say that he would - with pleasure - have given permission for me to use my findings, but when Penguin applied, for instance, to the BL, who in turn were to apply to the Owen Estate, for permission to photograph some MSS, no answer ever came. I believe that the majority of Owen's "war poems" are out of copyright, and I don't really think that Stallworthy's versions of these poems, not substantially different from Edmund Blunden's versions, can be copyrighted. And on one point, future editors and publishers please note, Stallworthy is wrong: in saying that they must apply to him or to Chatto and Windus or the Owen Estate for permission to reprint Blunden's edition, published in 1931, is, as I understand it, out of copyright with respect to his notes and his fine "Memoir", but to his versions of Owen's poems. Stallworthy implies that anyone, if they ask him nicely, can obtain his permission to use Owen's poems that are out of copyright - that is, those printed in the Blunden edition, I disagree on two counts: First, I do not think Stallworthy has such authority or licence; and, second, I believe Stallworthy is being disingenuous. When Penguin Books withdrew my edition of Owen in February 1986, they and I offered Stallworthy through Chatto a royalty "without prejudice" on every copy of my edition of the Owen poems sold; were Stallworthy to agree to its being put back on the market, Chatto (or is it Stallworthy?) have rejected this offer, and furthermore have indicated that if Penguin or myself were to publish an alternative edition of Owen's poems (the Blunden versions, for instance) they would take legal action on the withdrawn offending edition we have published.

Stallworthy claims he gets no financial reward for his labours as Trustee, but it may have occurred to less disingenuous readers that the more copies of his Owen edition he sells the larger his royalty. He appears to think (rightly perhaps) that the Owen market is finite and that therefore he does not want to share it with a third editor.

The truth is, however, that all three editions are very different. Stallworthy's paperback edition is primarily concerned with the poems (it has a few scholarly notes). Hibberd's edition interleaves the poems with the letters; that is certainly valuable, and who is disputing it? My edition, which Stallworthy cannot brook as a rival, seeks the educational market; every poem is glossed with a critical interpretation, however brief. Stallworthy considers my "annotations" to be "self-indulgent". This was not the opinion of the reviewer in the *Times Educational Supplement*, who wrote: "each [poem] is elucidated by a patient analysis, which brings new meaning to familiar lines".

Rather, my feelings with respect to indulgence could be returned upon Stallworthy who has, needlessly in my view, damaged the text of Owen's "Miners", and who in respect to other poems is - in his reading of some of the MSS - wrong.

JON SILKIN.  
19 Hindme Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Sir, - In reply (Letters, August 15) to Jon Silkin's gallant discussion of a serious problem (July 25), Jon Stallworthy wrote rudely and with ill-chosen logic. One suspects that power and profit are put first ("published . . . at immense cost") and poetry last.

Yet it remains that the poetry of Wilfred Owen (dead in France in 1918, a week before the Armistice) is now controlled, sixty-eight years later, by Chatto and Windus, and Jon Stallworthy.

After a certain time, poetic monuments are public property, not the fiefdom of an editor and his publisher.

JOHN A. C. GREPPIN.  
3085 Corydon Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44115.

## Cultural Property

Sir, - May I add a footnote to Edward Ullendorff's reference to the letters sent in 1872 by Emperor Yohannes of Ethiopia to Queen Victoria and to Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, which resulted in the British Museum restoring a bound illuminated manuscript, *Glory of the Kings*, to its country of origin (Letters, August 22)?

Yohannes's two letters also asked for the return of one other and even more valued possession which he believed, not unreasonably, had been removed by General Napier's military expedition to Ethiopia four years earlier. This was an early Renaissance depiction on wood of Christ with the Crown of Thorns, an *Ecce Homo* devotional image of probable Flemish or Iberian origin, which must have reached Ethiopia through Portuguese contacts in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Over some two centuries, as recounted in Ethiopian royal chronicles from 1672 onwards, the painting was referred to as the *Kiverata Re'ssu* and was carried into battle by the Emperor's armies. In time it became the most revered possession of the monarchy, it being customary for the Emperor's soldiers to swear their loyalty to him in its name. It also profoundly influenced Ethiopian art, while numerous copies, as manuscript illuminations, icons and, in one instance, a fresco survive from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

While the British Museum returned a copy of the *Glory of the Kings*, approaches to the principal repositories of the spoils of Napier's expedition failed to unearth the painting, and Queen Victoria replied to her Ethiopian counterpart: "of the picture we cannot discover or trace whatever we do not think it can have been brought to England". There the matter was to rest until after the death of Yohannes in 1889, when the existence of the painting was revealed to a small coterie of art historians on the Continent as belonging to the private collection of Richard Holmes, Librarian at Windsor Castle since 1870. Before then Holmes had been in the employ of the British Museum and had been the archaeologist attached to Napier's expedition. At an auction a few days after the capitulation of Magdala, he had purchased some 350 manuscripts (which

today comprise the bulk of the Museum's Ethiopian collection).

Holmes's widow put the painting up for sale in a London auction house in 1917. It was purchased anonymously, but resupplied on the London art market in 1930. The Ethiopian Embassy, warned too late to place a bid, attempted without success to repurchase it from its new owner, also anonymous. It remains in private hands to this day.

If Professor Ullendorff cannot agree with Richard Pankhurst's use of the word "loot", when applied to the Magdala collections in this country, its appropriateness in the instance of the *Kiverata Re'ssu* cannot be in doubt by any yardstick. One must hope that, by repurchase, this painting will one day be restored to the nation to which it properly belongs.

STEPHEN BELL.  
86 New Kings Road, London SW6.

## British Library Lending Services

Sir, - The protest against the extraordinary decision to destroy the fundamental purpose of the British Library by allowing its holdings to be lent out elsewhere deserves every scholar's urgent support. Characteristically, the decision seems to rest on some fashionable notion of studies owed to a faceless public, while the superior duty to learning is calmly ignored. As characteristically, this philistine policy has been slipped in by stages. At first we learned that the BL would serve only as a "library of last resort", which seemed to mean that in a rare emergency it would be willing to help, but now it appears that, especially for foreign material, including periodicals, it will move on to being a "library of first resort". Is there any need to elaborate the risks involved in temporary absence or indeed permanent loss of unique material - material which ought to rest securely in one place where those in need can be sure to find it?

Vincent Brome (Letters, August 15) is quite right to doubt the effectiveness of consultation and the impotence of those really concerned - the readers in the BL. When about a month ago I first heard of that second move, I wrote in protest to the chairman of the Trustees, who has not replied, and to the chairman of the Advisory Committee for the Reference Division, to whom this further development came as a surprise. Incidentally, what evidence is there that this departure from good practice will bring in money? It has already lost the library the peanuts of my subscription to its Friends.

G. R. ELTON.  
Clare College, Cambridge.

## The Melbourne Manuscript

Sir, - I, A. Shapiro (Letters, August 8) has made a notable discovery. From the examples he illustrates, the manuscripts by Shirley at Hertford and Longleat certainly appear to be autograph. Both share what the late P. J. Croft described as the "underlying identity" of Shirley's hand, as well as certain individual features. But I must point out that the very characteristics which distinguish Shirley's hand, mark it out from that of the Melbourne Manuscript. I am surprised that he should consider that there is any real similarity between the two.

FELIX PRYOR.  
20a Maitie Road, London W14.

## 'The Norms of Nature'

Sir, - Returning for a sabbatical leave to one of the countries which have been leading the world for several centuries in the study of ancient Greece and Rome, I read Christopher Row's review of *The Norms of Nature* (July 4) and my heart sank. It appears to maintain, by implication and inference, that classics in the past used to be parochial, and that ancient philosophers of previous generations were mostly "classicists" . . . who happened to deal with philosophical texts". It is only "now" that "the most important work is being done by scholars who are also, and often primarily, philosophers, and who begin by recognizing

that the authors of the texts they study are in the same business as themselves". Leaving aside the implication that British classical scholarship has been parochial in the past - when? at the time of Bentley, Pearson, Dawes, Dobree, or more recently, with scholars like Munro, Bywater and Housman? - is this a fair picture of ancient philosophers like Grote, Jowett, Joachim, Cornford or Resz? Some of these gentlemen were professors of philosophy and made significant contributions to the philosophical education and literature of their time. Their approach to philosophy and its nature may not meet with the approval of most present-day philosophers; nor would much of present-day philosophy have met with their approval - or with the approval of many of the ancient philosophers themselves.

What these gentlemen - and many others of their ilk in Britain and abroad - also had in common was a good grounding in the classical languages and the methods of investigating ancient texts. This was taken for granted, not as a substitute for the philosophical study of Plato, Aristotle or the Stoics, but as a necessary condition for the study of the ancient world in any of its aspects. Dr Rowe himself is a classical scholar by training, and he lectures in a department of classics. I was therefore even more alarmed to find him writing: "The editors have unfortunately allowed one contribution . . . to escape with key terms and passages in untranslated Greek and Latin, which unnecessarily restricts its readership in relation to the rest." "Unfortunately"? "Escape"? Since *The Norms of Nature* is a collection of technical studies by leading experts, analysing in detail some of the most complex of ancient texts, I fail to see what crime the editors committed when they allowed one contribution to get away with terms and quotations in languages with which any serious student of ancient philosophy should be thoroughly familiar. Would Dr Rowe have complained if, in a collection of studies of, say, Chaucer, some essays had been allowed "to escape with key terms and passages in untranslated English"?

JOHN OLUCKER.  
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## 'Galileo and His Sources'

Sir, - We are not surprised that William A. Wallace (Letters, July 25) is unable to feed up to the evidence outlined in our letter of February 14 and in our earlier review (November 22, 1985). Although he did not risk for our permission to deposit our letters in Florence or anywhere else, so far as we are concerned, anyone is at liberty to read the entire correspondence, together with all other relevant documents: that is to say, the whole evidence and nothing but the evidence, as it was written, without omissions, without additions, and without extraneous comments by other persons which do not constitute evidence. Since the list of items which he sent us omits essential documents and includes irrelevant extraneous comments by a member of his own institution, we have written to him asking him to include the former and to remove the latter and have so informed Professor Galluzzi. Some of the chief items omitted are mentioned in our letter of February 14. We have given Wallace permission to deposit in Florence the section of our book including the footnotes which was sent to him in January 1973. All this will simply confirm in more detail what we have already published about this case. Not that we envisage a rush of readers.

A. C. CROMBIE.  
Trinity College, Oxford.  
ADRIANO CARUGO.  
University of Venice.

## Ecclesiastical Headgear

Sir, - Eric Korn (Reminders, August 8) writes that "we cannot now ever be sure" what led Robert Browning to suppose "that 'twas' was an item of ecclesiastical headgear". The celebrated howler in *Pippa Passes* sprang surely from a misreading of two lines in the royalist rhymes, *Unity of Vanities* (1659):

They talk't of his having a Cardinals Hat,  
They'd send him as soon an Old Nuns Twat.

PETER FRYER.  
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# COMMENTARY

## A mood of departure

Jonathon Brown

Lighting Up the Landscape: French Impressionism and its origins  
National Gallery of Scotland, until October 19

The centrepiece of this exhibition is the large view of the banks of the Marne at Chennévières, painted by Pissarro around 1864, which is part of the National Gallery of Scotland's permanent collection. The ambition of the show, for which over one hundred works have been gathered both from Britain and from abroad, including six from Chicago and New York, is to demonstrate the context of this painting by Pissarro in the history of nineteenth-century French landscape painting, and in particular to reveal the interests and developments from which Impressionism emerged. This history starts with the traditional Salon, and moves through the new acceptance of the sketch as finished work, to early Impressionism itself. The oldest pictures here are from the late eighteenth century, and the cut-off date is 1875, for within ten years of that view of the Marne, Pissarro was painting in a fully Impressionist style, as were Monet, Renoir, Sisley and, in his own fashion, Cézanne. Not surprisingly, among their immediate ancestors it is Corot and Courbet who stand out, with ten and five works here respectively.

Corot died in 1875, and his art was doubtless arcaic and archaic to the young Impressionists. None the less, his devotion to landscape as a vehicle of the deepest personal expression was an inspiration to them. This belief had been held against the general depreciation of the genre in France at the turn of the nineteenth century, and the wistful quality of his work stood against all the industrial, scientific and even military unrest of its time. (We learn that Pissarro's studio was occupied by troops in the Franco-Prussian war.)

The Impressionists must have admired Courbet's cheek and exuberance, seen here at its most charmingly brash in "The Shore at Palsvas" (1854) in which the artist is portrayed taking his hat off to the ocean and to nature. Courbet's powerful picture of a breaking wave, and his snow scene are worth looking at elsewhere in the gallery.

In his seascapes the paint itself seems to splash and break, and this physical involvement with paint was to be an important aspect of Impressionism. Courbet had given to the language of paint itself an energetic vocabulary of resolute and bad manners with which to

meet the unrest of the times. The Impressionists took that vivid language to express an enjoyment of a simpler life and of a nature that was threatened by the fascinating tyranny of machines. The division between the primitive countryside and the sophistication of the city has always been alive in French life and politics, but scarcely with such tension as in the hundred years before the Second World War. Whereas Corot's attitude to landscape is one of wistful melancholy, the world seen on an evening stroll home, the predominant mood of Impressionism is one of departure rather than return, escape in an altogether more positive sense. Subjects such as steam engines and sailboats, and even steamboats belching their steam against the moon, were welcomed for the reason that, unlike many other manifestations of the ever-encroaching machine age, they offered the promise of new horizons. The less pastoral subjects come a little later, and are not represented here. For all the change in the techniques of landscape painting in those years there was also a change in the value of countryside, and even in the need for it.

Too much is made of the importance of light, and too little of the importance of rhythm, in the aims of the Impressionists. They were not slaves to the properties of light, for this exhibition it is clear that one of the most telling of Corot's skills is his power of suggestion in the darkly coloured passages of shade and shadow. Cézanne is unfortunately represented by only one work but, in its tight, elusive range of thick and darkish greens in shade, it is a brilliant tribute to Corot. The Impressionists saw light as movement; and colour as rhythm. With movement comes solidity and an inkling of spatial values; and with rhythm the inviolable of the spectator in that space. It is possible to see from that the manner in which the colourful outdoors of Impressionism and the angular indoors of Cubism belong together. The early Impressionists' concern with volume is seen here in the predominance of riverside scenes, and country lanes, places in which our perception of volume and space is most quickly defined.

The exhibition is stimulating both for the unexpected appearance by Delacroix (in particular "The Sea from the Heights at Dieppe", painted in the early 1850s) and the unexpectedly high quality of contemporaries such as François-Marius Granet, Johan Barthold Jongkind and Frédéric Bazille. In particular we can appreciate the true depth of upheaval that was required to achieve the easy sunny qualities of the later Impressionism we still take for granted.

## On the stone

Lynne Cooke

Willem de Kooning: The complete prints  
Fabian Carlson Gallery, 160 New Bond Street, London W1, until September 13

Since drawing lies at the heart of Willem de Kooning's art, printmaking might seem an inevitable extension to his work, but in fact he has made relatively few essays in this direction. To date there are some two dozen or so lithographs and a single etching, most of which were executed during a period of intense experimentation in 1970-1 when he also took up sculpture alongside his customary painting and drawing. The technical complexities involved with any type of printmaking inevitably counter that emphasis on improvisation, spontaneity and speed that characterizes his usual working procedures. Of the various techniques lithography, not surprisingly, proved most congenial, as transfer sheets could be spread on the floor for working and then cut and collaged into new wholes, as with his drawings. Although they share his familiar lexicon of motifs and subjects these prints are not merely translations of the repertoire of marks and surface effects that are found in his works in other media. Many sheets were destroyed as de Kooning explored the possibilities inherent in the new materials and techniques; the diversity of effects in the final works is remarkable.

On the one hand he avoids the stark silhouetting of black on white that is found in much printmaking — as well as his own ink drawings of the late 1950s — and on the other, he shuns the isolated, discrete, discontinuous marks which characterize his charcoal drawings of the 1970s. In works like "Clam Digger", which has closer affinities with his sculpture of that name than with his concurrent paintings, blotchy, smeared, inked areas of tone replace linear gestures, edges and boundaries. Elsewhere, as in "Sting Ray", the sfumato blurring of the plate conjures an aqueous ambience in which the omnia creature, almost as fugitive,



"Minnie Mouse" by Willem de Kooning, from the exhibition reviewed here.

unbounded and mobile as the matrix it inhabits, hovers. Others like "Love to Wskako", by contrast, are far sparser, more notational: traces left behind as distinct from inscriptions to the pristine sheet as is inevitably the case with a drawing. Those four works, which were executed directly on the stone, bypassing the intermediary transfer paper, differ in that they are crammed with jostling incident which engulfs the space and form in a restlessly eddying flow, a barrage of activity and energy well captured by such titles as "The Preacher" and "Minnie Mouse".

De Kooning's willingness to rethink his way into this new medium and to explore its affinities with and differences from processes more familiar to him shows in the freshness and vitality of these works. The multifarious results attest to his scrupulous concern to master these methods and to make individual statements. Printmaking never becomes simply the vehicle for a prolix outpouring nor the occasion for capitalizing on chance and novel effects.

## Illusion and insight

Roger Warren

W.A. MOZART  
Don Giovanni  
Idomeno  
Drottningholm Festival, Stockholm

The eighteenth-century stage machinery of the Drottningholm Court Theatre has been preserved in working order: waves on wooden rollers create the sea; thunder machines evoke storms or the supernatural; and revolving floors effect mid-scene transformations. All performances are accompanied on period instruments. The main challenge to directors working there is to strike a balance between antiquarian reconstruction and modern interpretation.

Göran Järvefelt's production of *Don Giovanni* shows just how to do this. He uses the theatre's flimsily decorative cloths and borders, but within them he presents a compellingly vivid account of the opera. Da Ponte's described Giovanni as "an extremely licentious young nobleman" and here he is certainly that, bursting on to the stage half-naked underneath his cloak, clearly fresh from seducing Donna Anna. But when he removes his mask, he reveals the whitened, painted face of a debauched libertine. There is a chillingly effective contrast between the lithe, youthful body and the ravaged face.

Järvefelt makes all the events "extremely licentious". Sex and violence, intermingled: Giovanni even stabs the Commendatore to the groin. Anna physically recalls Giovanni's embraces in the act of demanding vengeance; Ottavio's "Dalla sua pace" becomes a statement of frustrated desire. Their relationship develops in unusual ways: Anna overhears Ottavio's "Il mio tesoro" and begins to show interest in him because he threatens Giovanni with violence; but Ottavio, presented as Giovanni's antithesis, a handsome youth of normal appetites, grows increasingly tired of

Anna's endless blowing hot and cold. The supper scene is riveting: the Commendatore is at once a statue and an externalizing of Giovanni's own wilful self-destruction. Järvefelt's interpretation is put across with absolute conviction by Magnus Lindén (Giovanni), Clarry Bartha (Anna), and especially Stefan Dahlberg (Ottavio), a singer as fresh, sensitive and ardent that it is a pity he was not cast as Idomeno in *Idomeno* instead of the stolid mezzos who lack all those qualities.

Michael Hampe's *Idomeno* lacks any clear line; he seems content to display the theatre's machinery and to devise far-fetched eighteenth-century "heroic" gestures to match it. But only Antje Soldh's superb Electra is able to use these to any genuine expressive purpose. She alone achieves that integration of musical and physical gesture that normally distinguishes Hampe's productions. She floats her sibilant "Ido mio", Electra's one glimpse of happiness, with an exquisite sighing rapture; and she registers equally vividly the subsequent realization that her brief idyll is an illusion.

Hampe searches for psychological insights in the coloratura of Idomeno's "Fuor del mar", which Josef Protschka delivers in a kind of agitated staccato, as if Idomeno is a man whose guilty conscience makes him see visions of angry gods; and Neptune's face, projected on to gauze, accordingly materializes out of a clear sky. It is there one moment, gone the next, like Macbeth's airborne dagger or Faust's vision of Christ's blood streaming in the firmament. This suggestion that Neptune might be the external projection of the hero's doubts and fears could have been as interesting as Giovanni's self-destructive process if only it had been as confidently expressed.

Arnold Östman and the orchestra reflect the contrasting impact of the two productions. As well as the stage in the theatre's pit and side boxes, they are often a distraction in *Idomeno*, where Ilia's "Se il padre perdo" almost becomes a bassoon concerto with vocal accompaniment.

## New methods, new mysteries

Paul Griffiths

PIERRE BOULEZ  
Orientations: Collected writings  
Edited by Jean-Jacques Nattiez  
Translated by Martin Cooper  
541pp. Faber. £25.  
057113811X

One could write a book about the silences of composers in this century: the silence of Elgar, who wrote his Cello Concerto as a swansong and then lived on for fifteen years; the silence of Dukas, who probably went on writing and burning during the same period; the silence of Sibelius, who may similarly have given his Eighth Symphony to the stove; the silence of Schoenberg almost throughout his forties, before he began filling the void with twelve-note compositions which still have the salt of silence in their wildest restriction.

It is this silence of Schoenberg's that resonates most loudly with Boulez's own, and it is the essay on Schoenberg that strikes the darkest, coldest and seemingly most personal notes in this grand assembly of polemics, technical speculations, poetized tributes, sleeve notes and philosophical dances. Writing on the occasion of the centenary in 1974, Boulez remarks that his attitude to Schoenberg "has remained virtually unchanged", that he is "still fascinated by only one relatively short, but important period": the period of atonal expressionism given voice in, for example, the Three Piano Pieces, Op 11, the Five Orchestral Pieces, Op 16 and *Pierrot Lunaire*. Since 1974 he has performed and recorded much of Schoenberg's later output, and done so with marvellous brilliance; though quite without suggesting any change of mind. It is hard to imagine he would take issue with his 1974 conclusion that the "power... has vanished" from the twelve-note works, or that he would find a different reason for this vanishing than the one offered here: "the desire to 'make history' is incompatible with actually being historically important. Wanting to see oneself assuming a historic destiny is... wanting to be at the same time both egg and chick." Or later: "it is impossible to codify the awareness of a historic situation and, more specifically, an awareness of the future."

But wait a moment. If "codifying an awareness of the future" means anything it surely means making the sort of projection that has ostensibly guided Boulez during the past ten years in his Parisian redoubt, the Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique. Here is the evidence in his manifesto "Technology and the Composer", first published in English in the TLS of May 6, 1977: "musical invention will have something to learn from the language of technology", "we shall establish a geography of the sound universe", "the resounded extension of the material will inspire new modes of thought", "we shall have to strive to think in new categories, to change not only the methods but the very aim of creation". Poor old Schoenberg's prescriptions seem distinctly hesitant by comparison. And yet is one to suppose Boulez himself does not recognize that? A cynic might argue that the splendid verbal fireworks for IRCAM — all borrowed from Varèse's public pronouncements of half a century before — were designed to encourage the sponsors, to ensure that an adequate supply of government funding kept cascading down the steps into the underground computer studio. But I cannot believe Boulez's motivation is so simple: I have an awful conviction (awful because it knows itself to be hopeless) to the cry which echoes through these pages for new creative machinery, new orchestral management, new concert-halls and, perhaps most of all, new audiences.

On one level Boulez's dilemma is classically that of the rebel who suddenly finds he has been made king. When he began as a composer, at the end of the Second World War, there was everything to fight against in the Paris of Pauline and Milhaud and Nadia Boulanger. And he had reason to fight; too, in his certainty that Schoenberg's and Stravinsky's had betrayed the great adventure of the first wave of modernism in 1908-13. Hence the sense in his early music of rage carried to a point of ecstasy, of concepts being shattered all around and of the emptiness singing. But by 1952, when he was

twenty-seven, he had done it all. There were no worlds left to destroy, and the young barbarian found himself met not with hostility but with approbation, as measured in the all-important terms of publishers' contracts, performances and commissions from German festivals. All that was left to him was a great affirmation of negation in *Le marteau sans maître*, which could never be repeated or else its essence would shrivel: its fierce strength is its incomparability with anything else, its self-imposed loneliness. And if Boulez had then died, like Schubert, at the age of thirty-one, his essential work would have been done; though of course we in ignorance would be lamenting the loss of the masterpieces of his maturity.

The lack of music from the living composer is cause for reflections of another kind, and must surely be a terrible wonder to the person it most intensely concerns. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, in the excellent introduction he has provided for this English translation, takes up Boulez's own point about the critic revealing himself in his response to the work of another: he directs our attention to, for instance, Boulez's admiration for Wagner's flexibility of tempo, extreme variation and ambiguous musical forms (with these preferences, it is no wonder his Binyueth Ring failed to please). And certainly Boulez often seems in a very direct way to be writing about his own music when in these essays he writes about Wagner, or Mahler, or Debussy, or again most conspicuously, Schoenberg. For beneath his fascination with the Schoenberg of 1908-12 there is perhaps the despair of a fascination with his own, similarly frenzied works of 1947-54; and when he calls for a magnificent collaboration between musicians and scientists at IRCAM, it is less to chart the future course of music than to provide conditions in which he can leap as he leapt before.

But of course there are no charts or compasses for voyages to infinity, and Boulez must be aware that his insistence on perpetual renewal has to carry with it a refusal of all planning. Hence the sighs he makes with Klee about wanting to forget Europe, and the surprisingly frequent references to Claudel, who is referred to more frequently than any other non-musician except Mallarmé, and who is praised, in an essay not included in either French edition of this collection, as having "understood the Asian world better than anyone else". Hence, too, the alarming awareness which underlies such a defensive interior dialogue as this:

Does not this unrestrained desire for knowledge carry with it, automatically, a terrible curse? Is there not something unhealthy about such curiosity, something destructive in this ambition — this determination at all costs to pursue secrets destined to remain buried in the deepest recesses of consciousness? ... Well, to be honest these fears do not worry me... Surely my own complex nature is sufficient to face these different situations, or rather to adapt itself to these apparently incompatible states?

That was Boulez in 1960, when perhaps he was still able to persuade himself that he could at once create and know what it was he was creating, that he could simultaneously "make history" and be historically important, that he could make the "wild discoveries" he so much eulogizes and yet do so within a context that he had himself constructed. The story of his music over the last thirty years does not allow one to be so sanguine, and probably Boulez himself was never very convinced of the possibility. There have been composers who could do and know at the same time: Milton Babbitt would be an example. But they have not been composers who, like Boulez, are so obsessed with the uncertain, imprecise, ambiguous, fleeting and fragmentary. Boulez's most essential problem is that of wanting to know how to create a mystery, and then of needing to find completely new methods for each new mystery, or else one might shed light on another.

He probably thought he had found the answer when, immediately after *Le marteau sans maître* in 1957, he embarked on several works destined to codify manifold possibilities of performance within themselves, with sections that could be differently ordered or performed at different speeds or played at different dynamic levels: those works included the Third Piano Sonata, the second book of *Sirénades* for two pianos and *Pli selon pli*, the "portrait of Mallarmé" for soprano and

orchestra. But for these works to remain truly open, truly mysterious, they had to remain unfinished; and though the piano duo was eventually published, Boulez has repeatedly changed *Pli selon pli* (there have been changes even since the second recording, made in 1981) and released only two of the five "formants" of his sonata, which is the subject of one of his essays here. The solution, then, to the problem of creating fully explored mysteries is to create what Boulez might call "virtual works", works which exist only in the imagination, and one senses this lure of silent music when he writes, for example, of Berlioz's dream of a gargantuan orchestra, or of the symphonies that Wagner might have written after *Parzifal*, or of what Berg's third opera might have been. If the composer can no longer be climbing to reveal truth, if he has drawn from the past all the conclusions he is prepared to draw (as Boulez had by 1951), and if he cannot any longer believe himself to be contributing to the formation of a shared language (the dream that kept Boulez going throughout the 1950s) — if, finally, his only purpose is what Boulez keeps calling "self-expression" or "self-definition" — then silence is the most honourable course.

There can be no question that silence has been imposed on Boulez by his activities as a performing musician. During the years when he was most volcanically productive, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, he was at the same time composing, arranging, playing and conducting for Jean-Louis Enraut's theatre company; and the evidence is that his later works, where they have appeared, have appeared very quickly. Nor is it perhaps quite the whole truth that conducting has been an escape for the blocked composer. Rather Boulez found in the activity of conducting a means of "self-definition" no less effective than the means he had found in composition (he says as much several

times in this volume). Moreover, the recreation of a work composed by another hand would be the ideal virtuality, endlessly mutable. It may therefore be Boulez's personal development that has led him inevitably from composition to conducting, and that the missing works of the last three decades are to be found in his performances of Stravinsky, Wagner, Mahler, Berg, and the many others on whom he writes illuminatingly in these essays.

Nattiez's view, though, is different, and he makes a good case for seeing *Répons* — the IRCAM work for percussion soloists, orchestra and electronics — as the true completion to all the unfinished works. Yet *Répons* itself remains incomplete, five years after its first performance, and to me it has more the sound of the intellectual running-on-the-spot one finds in the extraordinary essay "Le goût et la fonction", where Boulez spends twenty pages chasing chimeras of aesthetics only to confess at the end that he has been merely fulfilling his function as lecturer. Could *Répons* be merely the noise he makes — glorious noise as it is — when he fulfils his function as composer? Certainly all his other works of the last fifteen years suggest that music's only other function is to be present or absent, perhaps to celebrate its own absence: both the orchestral *Rituel* and the little *Mémoire* for flute and ensemble, introduced to Enghien at the King's Lynn Festival in July, are versions of the *tombau* for Stravinsky, "... explosive fire ...".

This review must end with another commemoration. Martin Cooper, who died shortly before his labours appeared in print, will be remembered for other things than translating Boulez, but it is to his skill and sensitivity that we owe so faithful a reproduction of all the explosiveness in Boulez's thought, and all the fixity.

## September Books

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Hodder & Stoughton

## AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 292  
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office no later than September 19. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or falling that the most nearly correct — in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration. Entries, marked "Author, Author 292" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on September 26.

1. I've always liked cutthroat trout. They put up a good fight, running against the bottom and then broad jumping. Under their throats they fly the orange banner of Jack the Ripper.

2. "Forgive me, every speckled trout" Says Semphill then, "And every swim and eider on these waters Certain strange men Taking advantage of my poverty Have wheedled all my loach-craft out."

3. Green Cove gap from Preacher Millsap's cabin. We walked a confidential hour of victory, Slipped to the west on a trail that led us To bald River where mup and scene were one In seen-identity. Eight trout is the story In eight miles.

Competition No 288  
Winner:  
Answers:

1. She kept an antique shop — or it kept her. Among Apostolic spoons and Bristol glass, The faded silks, the heavy furniture, She watched her reflection in the brass Salvers and a silver bowl, as if to prove

Polish was all, there was no need of love. Elizabeth Jeodings, "My Grandmother".

2. Laugh if you like at this mysterious denizen Of middle-class life in the liberal past. The playpus stuffed, and the frightful epergne. You who are now overtaxed and debauched Laugh while you can, for the time may come round When the rubbish you treasure will lie in this place. William Plomer, "The Caledonian Market".

3. Look left at the birds stitched Still in their singing, at the sword half-drawn from the scabbard — look left More left to me, this side of the window, A two-legged, man-legged cabinet Of antique feelings, all of them genuine. Norman MacCaig, "Antique Shop Window".

*Caribbean Focus '86*, a programme of exhibitions and events initiated by the Commonwealth Institute in co-operation with the Commonwealth Caribbean governments, continues at the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8, until November 30. Among the forthcoming events is a season of Caribbean Theatre which runs from October 1 to 26 and which includes the St Lucian National Theatre's productions of *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* by Derek Walcott and *Bunio nian* by Roderick Walcott as well as works by the Jamaican Women's theatre collective, Sistren, and the Pan-Caribbean Theatre Company, *West Indian Hojies and Home*, an exhibition of traditional architecture, can be seen until September 28. Further details are available from the Commonwealth Institute, 01-603 4535.



## The content of "content"

Thomas Baldwin

CHRISTOPHER PEACOCKE  
Thoughts: An essay on content  
175pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £15.  
0631 146741

The topic of Christopher Peacocke's new book is the "intentionality" of our mental life. That is, he aims to explicate what exactly it is about a belief which makes it the particular belief it is – the belief that grass is green, say, rather than that snow is white.

There are two well-established approaches to this topic: one takes as primary the fact that we use language to express thoughts, and aims to explicate the intentionality of thought by means of an account of the meaning of language. This is the approach which has been dominant within analytic philosophy this century and it still flourishes. But in recent years it has been challenged by those who have been inspired by cognitive psychology and allied disciplines to argue that the intentionality of mental states is to be understood primarily in terms of the causal significance of these states within our lives.

This is not a behaviourist approach, for there is no attempt to analyse mental states simply in terms of dispositions to behaviour; rather, the thesis is that an account of someone's mental states is an account of the causal role of some of

their inner brain states – especially those with a representational character. I think this latter approach still has a good deal of ground to cover before commanding general assent; but it has also been responsible for most of the new ideas in recent work on this topic.

Professor Peacocke's book does not fall within either of these approaches. For, on the one hand, he insists on the primacy of thought over language; but, on the other, he insists that his inquiry is directed at the a priori normative structure of our thoughts, not at their causal significance. The result is that in one respect his book has a rather old-fashioned flavour. Peacocke's a priori psychology is reminiscent of the work of the Brentano school. This is no great objection to it (some would judge it a merit), but it does give rise to the Kantian question as to what makes possible the a priori truths that he so confidently lays out.

At the heart of Peacocke's account are two propositions: (1) that the content of our judgments is constituted by what he calls their "acceptance-conditions", and (2) that realist truth-conditions for the judgments can be derived from their acceptance-conditions. There is no simple account to be given of these acceptance-conditions, for it is central to Peacocke's argument that they vary according to the type of judgment, but they approximate in function to Wittgensteinian criteria (according to one influential account of these) in that they are intended both to determine the con-

tent of a judgment and to provide ways in which a subject can manifest what he or she is judging through revealing a sensitivity to evidence that is necessarily relevant to his or her judgment. Their latter role is not clearly explained in the book; for despite Peacocke's thesis about the priority of thought over language, it would seem that the use of language has here a primary role, since once one moves beyond simple thoughts it is typically only through language that we are able to manifest sensitivity to acceptance-conditions.

However that may be, as Peacocke develops his argument it becomes clear that we are back in the Oxford of the 1970s, and Peacocke is arguing that Dummett's "anti-realism" does not follow from his manifestation requirement (which Peacocke's acceptance-conditions are intended to satisfy) and his anti-holism (which Peacocke also accepts, though his argument against Quine to this effect is pretty cursory). On the realist side, Peacocke aims to show that one can manifest one's understanding of a judgment whose truth-conditions are such that one is not in a position to determine whether or not they obtain. He argues this through in some detail with respect to inaccessible places and times; the crucial premiss is that an account of the acceptance-conditions in the accessible case invokes a causal relation between the subject's experience, eg of temporal order, and an objective temporal relation between events. He then suggests that this causal

condition enables us to project ourselves determinately in thought from the accessible to the inaccessible (by iterating the temporal relation which has to obtain objectively in the accessible case). This is certainly an interesting idea with which I have much sympathy. But Peacocke does not in fact spell out in detail the acceptance-conditions for thoughts about the inaccessible, and I rather wonder whether, in doing so, he might not find himself weakening Dummett's manifestation requirement and embracing a more holistic perspective than he is officially committed to.

There is a great deal of further interest in this book. In particular, in the last two chapters he turns to epistemology and seeks to link his account of the content of judgment with an account of knowledge. It is clear that there ought to be such a link, since his account of content has been in terms of the epistemic concept of acceptance-conditions, and in the final chapter he argues for an internalist conception of knowledge which attends to internal relations between a subject's evidence and that which he or she claims to know. I did not find this altogether persuasive; but the previous chapter is a brilliant critical discussion of Nozick's account of knowledge – quite the best I have encountered, and one in which Peacocke displays to the best the combination of acuity, imagination and persistence which make him one of the most creative philosophers of the moment.

has been collected at a time so ripe to receive it, when many other philosophers are in reaction against what he has long opposed, while the debates and issues remain vigorous because there are still emotivists and subjectivists and projectivists to controvert. But the main preservative of these writings has been and will be their own merit. Kurt Baier puts it fairly in his foreword:

What has struck me most as I reread these essays – and what I feel sure will strike others – is how much better his thought has stood the test of time, how much clearer the problems he raises are to ours, and how much less dated his essays are in terms of methodology and commitment to philosophical styles than those of the best-known (perhaps because most frequently and passionately refuted) of his contemporaries. The freshness of much of Falk's work is probably explained partly by the fact that he was never a "schoolman", never a wholehearted logical positivist, Wittgensteinian, or ordinary language philosopher.

Yet Falk's method, which is implicit in his writings and not emblazoned on a banner, is like Wittgenstein's in being deliberately and realistically descriptive. Human beings will recognize themselves as the rational animals portrayed in these pages, and will be grateful to a thinker who never forgets that we are animals but still remembers that we are rational.

Surely many a dispositional predicate, like "magnetized" and "buoyant", intimates the presence of a single common state or mechanism underlying the relevant phenomena. Other stages of Prior's argument are equally open to question, and the level of discussion often falls well short of that set by previous work on dispositions.

*Modern Movements in European Philosophy* (346pp. Manchester University Press. £25. 00 7190 17467) by Richard Kearney is a survey of the writings of eighteen of the leading philosophers in France and Germany in this century. They are classified into three categories: Phenomenology, Critical Theory, and Structuralism – each of which is represented by six thinkers. Phenomenology was first put forward by Husserl; his most famous successors, as treated in this book, were Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida. The major proponents of Critical Theory here are Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, Antonio Gramsci, Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas. Those of Structuralism are Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser and Roland Barthes.

## Rome's manifest destiny

Nicholas Horsfall

PHILIP R. HARDIE  
Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmas and imperium  
405pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £35.  
019 8140363

On a first-century ac fresco found in Rome in 1875, there is a scene of builders at work; clearly the city walls belong to the age of myth or legend, for individuals pick up blocks of stone single-handed: Homeric heroes lift stones which would defeat two of the poet's contemporaries, but Virgil's Turnus picks up a stone "which twelve chaste men could with difficulty carry on their shoulders".

Epic hyperbole is in general out of favour ("false intensity", "bombast", "grotesque exaggeration"), but Philip R. Hardie has little time for current critical fashions: this is not "the book of the thesis" and both its subject-matter and its conclusions distance him, starkly and thankfully, from the tedious preoccupations of most contemporary Virgilians. Thus, there are fifty pages here on hyperbole: how it was viewed in antiquity and what Virgil does with it, in terms of a coherent and dominating cosmological theory, inherited substantially from Lucretius. A long and subtle exposition of Virgil's relationship to Lucretius, as disciple and opponent, wielding the master's own weapons of polemic, is an unexpected bonus for readers. So what of warriors heaving very large stones? They not only "magnify the actions of the individual", but widen the significance of those actions "beyond their immediate place in time and space". Virgilian heroes act, moreover, within a cosmic context, reaching from Heaven to Hades, and their deeds can carry implications that reach from Ocean to Ocean and indefinitely, beyond the limitations of the narrative present. There is a common feature in all good recent writing on the *Aeneid* (though there is little enough of it): the revelation of an endless series of complexities within the emotional, intellectual and stylistic textures of the narrative.

In Hardie's *Aeneid*, allegory is restored to its proper, central position; to the epic it functions in a manner comparable to hyperbole; both often in some sense "articulate an extensive comparison between two conceptual levels". Hardie's exposition of Virgilian allegory also constitutes a fully sufficient answer to the conceptual and methodological objections recently advanced by Jasper Griffin to typological interpretations of the *Aeneid*, typology being but a form of allegory particularly dear to the theologians.

Perhaps the most novel and exciting part of the exposition concerns the combat of Giants and Olympians: explicitly, the theme occurs seldom in the *Aeneid*, yet when Virgil, for example, describes the Winds raging in Aeolus' cave in *Aeneid* 1, he does so in terms used by Hesiod of the imprisoned Titans, and allusions to that vast and ancient conflict prove to be pervasive in Virgilian narrative, simile and metaphor. Here Hardie introduces the surprise, at least to Latinists, for historians of ancient art have long known of the powerful influence of the art of Pergamum in Augustan Rome: now we are seductively presented with a powerful case for the impact of both the scholarship and the artistic imagery of the Attalid court, most notably in the visual allegory of Giants for invading Gauls, and it matters little that Hardie probably misunderstands the Latin of Virgil's own obscure and possibly unfinished descriptive treatment on Aeneas' shield of the Gauls attacking the Capitol.

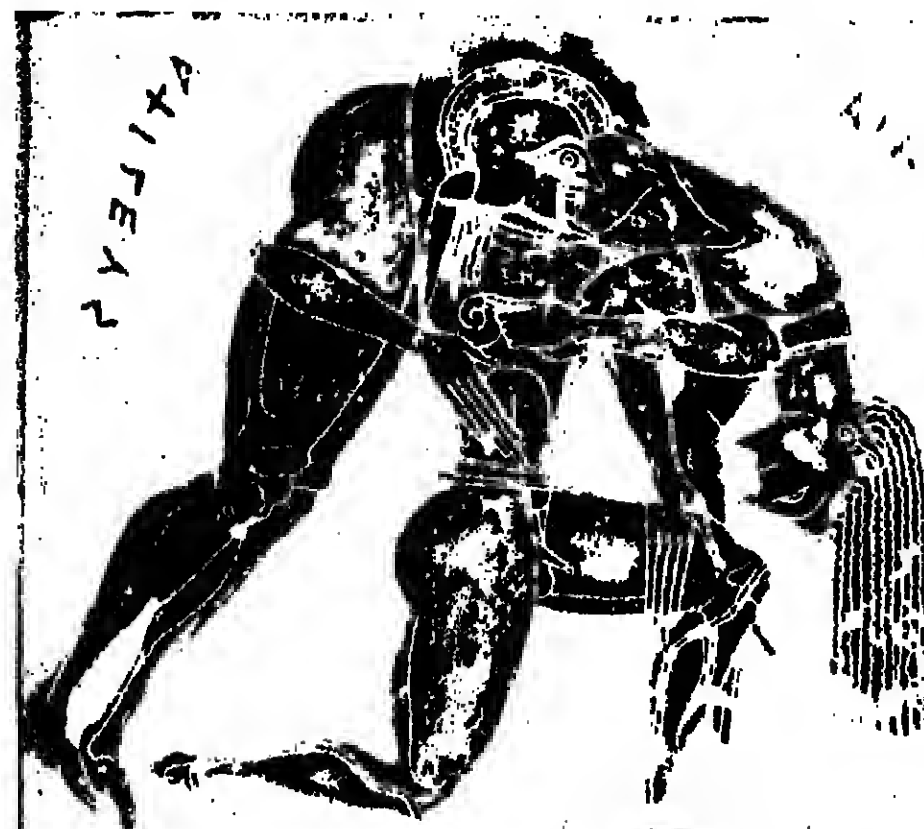
This shield, made by Vulcan for Aeneas in the eighth book, lies at the heart of Hardie's interpretation: it is not only modelled on Achilles', but, we learn, clearly inspired by an ancient "allegorical" interpretation of that model; both of the ancient interpretations that Hardie discusses in detail were, curiously, advanced by female Homer specialists in antiquity. Not only, therefore, is Aeneas' shield essential for the hero of the narrative, but he carries into battle – as he carried his father from Troy (a parallelism guaranteed by verbal echoes, though belittled by Hardie), and, even more important, perhaps, as Atlas carried the globe – a "cosmic load", a rich and complex emblem of Rome's rule, lasting and universal. Curiously, Hardie seems to make no refer-

ence to the abundance of biographical information, some of it imaginably ancient and authentic, that survives about Virgil's scientific and philosophical grounding: in Epicureanism under Siro on the Bay of Naples, "in medicine too, and mathematics"; the poet even intended, we are told, to devote his life, after completing the *Aeneid*, to philosophy. Such details reinforce Hardie's argument and render more credible his attribution to Virgil of a dominating concern with cosmological theory.

In one respect, particularly, the book's cosmological approach is likely to startle: remarks about "Hardie's Fascist Virgil" have indeed reached this reviewer's ears. Such dismay is quite unfounded and misapplied and does no justice to the author's delicately delineated position: "at the ideological level there is a clarity of outline, a grandiose and hyperbolic confidence, which are at the opposite pole from the subdued shadows and uncertain reality that characterize much of the human action". This need to approach the *Aeneid* (and *Georgics* for that matter) with dogmas suspended and preconceptions suppressed becomes ever more crucial: I am delighted to find Hardie stating coolly and quite correctly that on one level at least Virgil views the manifest destiny of Augustan Rome as world-rule; what is new is that this aspect of the epic (and it is only one aspect of an infinitely complex ideological and emotional outlook) is anchored securely – which it never was in 1938, when this feature of the *Aeneid* was last studied in detail – in a rich exposition of ancient views about the identity of empire and universe, city and world, *urbs* and *orbis*. Stoic beliefs will not go away just because they are today politically unfashionable or ideologically unpopular: Hardie has done very well to re-create for us as much of the lost or only half-understood philosophical background to the *Aeneid*, and not to the *Aeneid* alone, for he also discusses in detail the perplexing conflicts within the end of *Georgic* 2 ("an irreconcilable clash between faith and reason") and between it and the proemium of *Georgic* 3 ("complementary explorations of two alternative ways of taking flight in the grand manner"). He is also fortunately tolerant of the simultaneous presence of conflicting ideologies, though even he can make little of the comparison of Aeneas to the hundred-handed Aegeon ranging against Jupiter's thunderbolts.

This is a bold and original book, which serious students of Latin literature – and it is frankly inaccessible to others – will do well to read with close attention. Few, unfortunately, will enjoy the experience: ideological discomforts aside, readers will find Hardie's prose both prolix and congealed; the book, quite accurately printed and very handsomely produced, could easily have been shorn of fifty pages, and even a specialist reviewer longed at times for a clearing in the jungle, to provide refreshment and orientation. But the achievement of producing a genuinely original and important work on Virgil today is very considerable; it "should be seen as preliminary to a global critical approach": does that mean, in Hardie's case, that more is to come? He really may, unprecedentedly, have two good books on the *Aeneid* in him; the next might, one hopes, also be readable.

Number Three in the new AMS *Ars Poetica* series of volumes is *Virgil at 2000: Commemorative essays on the poet and his influence*, edited by John D. Bernard (342pp. New York: AMS Press. \$39.50, 0 404 62503 7), containing fifteen papers, of which three – Paul Alpers' "Community and Convention in Virgilian Pastoral", W. R. Johnson's "The Figure of Laertes: Reflections on the character of Aeneas" and Allen Mandelbaum's "Taken from Brindisi": Virgil in an other's otherworld" – were given at the University of Houston-University Park symposium on October 26, 1981, to mark the millennium of the poet's death. Others include Gary B. Mills and Archibald W. Allen's "Virgil and the Augustan Experience", J. W. Jones, Jr's "The Allegorical Traditions of the *Aeneid*", Christine G. Perkell's "Virgil's Itinerary Reconsidered", Gordon Williams' "Statius and Virgil: Defensive Imitation", Meyer Reinhold's "Virgil in the American Experience from Colonial Times to 1882" and the editor's own introductory "Virgil: 'Prince of song'".



Ajax carrying the body of Achilles – a painting on the handle of the François vase. The vase, at present in the Museo Archeologico in Florence, was painted by Kleitias and made by Ergotimos in about 570 BC. The paintings include scenes of battle, the hunt of the Calydonian boar, funeral games in honour of Patroklos, the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, and Achilles in pursuit of Troilus. The detail reproduced here is taken from Susan Woodford's introduction to *Greek Art* (1986pp. Duckworth. £24. 07156 2078 9).

## Tragic significances

J. H. C. Leach

AESCHYLUS  
Cbeopbari  
Edited by A. F. Garvie  
394pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £30.  
0198141882  
JOHN HERRINGTON  
Aeschylus  
191pp. Yale University Press. £25 (paperback, £6.95).  
0300035624

A. F. Garvie's *Chaeophori*, edited with introduction and commentary, demonstrates both the strengths and the occasional drawbacks of some recent Oxford commentaries on the classics. Meticulous and profound scholarship, wide familiarity with relevant work, painstaking attention to detail: all these are to be seen in profusion. The serious student will ask much, and will rarely be disappointed, whether on the play's staging, metres, text, treatment of the myth, or a host of other topics. This of course raises a problem: what to omit? When the Oxford series of commentaries on Euripides was launched fifty years ago, it was designed for use by sixth-form schoolboys as well as by undergraduates. Denys Page's *Medea* (1938), for example, managed to cover about twelve lines of Greek to a page of commentary; Garvie, using a notably small print, covers only about three-and-a-half lines. One major reason for this, of course, is the enormous expansion of secondary material in recent years, much of it demanding attention and appropriate reference and consideration; but by a stretch of the imagination could Garvie's commentary be regarded as suitable for anyone with less Greek than a distinctly competent undergraduate specializing in Greek drama.

The place of *Chaeophori* in the middle of the only trilogy to come down to us complete, together with the accident of the survival of the same story in the powerful *Electra* plays of both Sophocles and Euripides, has perhaps occasionally led to its overshadowing. Garvie's introduction gives an account of the myth, as it existed before Aeschylus, that is so replete with detail as to make for reading of a discouragingly dense and sometimes even confusing kind. But this work of genuine scholarship can only be welcomed as an outstanding, and outstandingly produced, long-needed edition from the Clarendon Press.

Very different are the objectives of John Herrington's *Aeschylus*. The author tells us that

the aim of this book (as of the series of which it is part) is "to guide the reader towards his or her personal confrontation with the ancient texts". Herrington eschews the use of Greek, either in text or transliteration. Those with some knowledge of Greek may well find the thoughtful and detailed accounts of the individual plays – perhaps especially *Eumenides* – more helpful than the modern parallels drawn with ecology, the "ultimate catastrophe of nuclear war", Aeschylus's theatre of cruelty, Goethe, Milton, Donne, Marlowe and Hopkins. But Herrington's broad-brush approach does not allow him to make more than cursory mention of so topical a question as that of the authenticity of *Prometheus Bound* – even though he was himself the author of *The Author of the "Prometheus Bound"* (1970), which tended to accept the Aeschylean authorship before the strong arguments on the other side adduced by Mark Griffith. Herrington's bibliographical epilogue draws attention to most of the works to which a student should be directed, though without R. P. Winnington-Ingram's *Studies in Aeschylus* (1983), and referring only to H. J. Mette's unsatisfactory and out-of-print edition of the fragments, although the Loeb edition, incorporating the fragments, of H. Weir Smyth, revised by H. Lloyd-Jones, is still useful and readily accessible. There is a table of dates and a brief but serviceable index.

## Values for the rational animal

Renford Bambrough

W. D. FALK  
Ought, Reasons, and Morality: The collected papers  
291pp. New York: Cornell University Press.  
\$29.95.  
08014 17848

It is common enough for a collection of miscellaneous articles to be disguised as a book. *Ought, Reasons, and Morality* is something rarer: it is presented as a volume of collected papers but is more of a book than many books. W. D. Falk belongs to the heyday of the philosophical article. Though five of these essays are now published for the first time, and several of the reprinted pieces have dates in the 1970s, he first flourished in the 1940s and 50s, and the later work retains strong links with that epoch. The articles have the close texture favoured by philosophers who were reacting against what they saw as the deplorably belletristic habits of their immediate predecessors. None of them departs far in either direction from their average length of twenty pages. There are not many passages with any touch of colour, and never a hint of purple. It was important to that genera-

tion of British philosophers to be unexciting because it was important to be unexcited.

All this gives unity of tone and tempo, but makes the book sound less arresting, engaging and enlightening than it proves to be. It amounts to a balanced and well-focused view of some of the main questions of ethics. It is a pity that the work was not called *Gauding and Guiding*. Falk's article of that title (in *Mind*, 1953) is the best-known of the reprinted papers, and it already sketches the lines of the larger structure. Stevenson and Ayer and the other emotive theorists of the 1940s had represented value judgments as sticks and carrots, meant to browbeat or cajole us into changing or maintaining attitudes or feelings or dispositions. Falk's corrective to their exaggeration reminds us that value judgments may also be the reins that guide us along the path of reason.

Again and again, from "Gauding and Guiding" onwards, he insists on the role of facts in moral debate; not "moral facts", whatever they might be, but what some Cambridge philosophers used to call "facts in the *Straud Magazine* sense". My attitude to this or that act or person or policy may be altered or reinforced by my coming to know better what he or she or it is like. What is more distinctive and even more valuable is Falk's recognition and elucidation of the part played in moral reason-

ing by reminders of facts that are already familiar, but whose relevance is not seen or not remembered. The oversight may be a lapse of understanding, or it may constitute "motivated irrationality", a possibility that leads Falk into a number of illuminating comments on *Akrasia*.

The upshot is not so much to restore reason to her throne as to confirm that she was never effectively deposed. For Falk takes a wide historical view as well as a wide philosophical view. Aristotle and Kant, Hume and Butler, Moore and Braad and Prichard are all called as witnesses or made to stand up straight in the dock. Part Three, "Reason and Society", acknowledges a public dimension of philosophy and morals that philosophers and moralists of Falk's generation were often and plausibly accused of ignoring. Here the ancient landmarks by which he steers include Rousseau and Hegel and Marx. Both there and in Part Two, "Morality", he is also willing to offer moral guidance as well as to pursue the epistemological questions that are most prominent in Part One, "Reasons, Goals, and Ought". He is wise and patient, clear and calm, especially about problems of technology and ecology and other minefields through which many thinkers and a multitude of the thoughtless are more ready and able to goad us than to guide us.

It is partly Falk's good fortune that his work

of objects. But this premise needs much more argument than she gives it. It may indeed be the case that a full account in terms of atomic structure of why this glass is fragile will differ markedly from a parallel explanation of why that vase is fragile. However, this is quite compatible with there being a rather higher level of physical description which abstracts from fine details and discerns the same causally salient structural property as present in the two cases – and this property is then a candidate for identification as the common physical basis of the shared fragility. Further, suppose we discovered that what we had thought to be manifestations of a single disposition in fact resulted from two utterly different physical mechanisms; imagine, for example, that this had turned out to be the case with magnetic phenomena. Would the use of a unitary dispositional notion of being magnetized have survived this discovery? It is not clear that it would. Suppose it turns out that some living things do not sink in water, not because of displacement pressure, but because they originate on their undersides like miniature jet engines and continuously produce an upward thrust. Would we really remain content to describe these things as buoyant, just because they bob back to the surface if pushed under?

the disposition? And if the latter, is this basis identical with the disposition itself?

At first blush, these residual questions hardly seem worth a book, and Prior hasn't convinced me otherwise. Nor has she convinced me of the answers which she labours towards. In summary, she argues that a disposition must have a categorical basis, and that this basis cannot be identified with the disposition itself. Rather, dispositions are functional second-order properties, defined in terms of a quantification over other properties. Schematically, a glass is fragile if and only if it has some categorical property which would causally result in the glass breaking were it to be suitably dropped. Two brief comments: first, it is plainly essential for Prior's account that she can establish a sharp distinction between dispositional properties and the rest. However, her treatment of this crucial distinction seems woefully thin; in fact, she does little more than try to dispose of one argument against the distinction due to D. H. Mellor. The attempt has been published before, accompanied by an incisive reply from Professor Mellor: yet this reply is completely ignored by Prior.

Second, Prior rests a lot on the premise that the same disposition, eg fragility, can have many different sorts of bases in different sorts

## Ifs and only ifs

Peter Smith

ELIZABETH PRIOR  
Dispositions  
114pp. Aberdeen University Press. £12.50  
(paperback, £8.50).  
088 032418 5

Elizabeth Prior's main concern is with a narrow range of simple "dispositional" properties like fragility and solubility. These once seemed to be highly problematic to philosophers. For on any view, statements about dispositions are intimately related to subjunctive conditional statements: roughly speaking, the glass is fragile if it is such that it would break if it were suitably dropped. And subjunctive conditionals used to be regarded as pretty disreputable and obscure. Times have changed; philosophers are no longer so doubtful about such modal idioms. But if the propriety of subjunctive conditionals is not at issue, there is still a problem about how exactly to understand the phrase "it is such that". In the account of fragility just sketched, is it redundant? Or is it an essential place-holder indicating, perhaps, the presence of some basis for the disposition, ie a property which explains the manifestations of

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# A matter of taste

John Ward

SIDNEY W. MINTZ  
Sweetness and Power  
274pp. Viking. £14.95.  
0670447022

Why do we consume sugar? The common view is that most of us have more or less a natural liking for sweet things. (According to biologists, this taste enabled our foraging ancestors to distinguish ripe fruit.) However, it is only over the past three hundred years that sweetness in the concentrated form of sucrose, yielded by sugar-cane or beet, has taken an important part in human diet. So orthodox history emphasizes the developments – overseas colonization, plantation agriculture, cheaper transport – which have made sugar readily available, at least to the "developed" world. An increased scale of output has served to gratify an instinctive demand. Sidney W. Mintz finds this explanation unsatisfactory and incomplete. Commodities, in his view, are not merely epiphenomena of a productive process; they must also be considered as items of consumption, penetrating social behaviour. Sugar, in particular, has shaped history as an expression and instrument of power.

Sugar-cane, first domesticated on New Guinea in prehistoric times, moved westwards via India, to be propagated round the Mediterranean by the Arab conquests. Sugar was much used as a condiment by the élites of medieval Europe, becoming especially important, Mintz argues, because unlike other spices

it could be made into paste and used for sculpting symbolic models: "castles, towers, houses, bears and apes". These "subtleties" – displayed, admired and eaten at a great man's table – served to validate his authority. Thus a food gained social "meaning", and from the fifteenth century the impulse to grow sugar encouraged European settlement on the Atlantic islands and in the Americas.

During the seventeenth century the English established themselves in the West Indies as the most effective tropical colonists, and sugar planting, supported by coerced labour and preferential taxation, made a new association with power as the pivot of maritime empire. Later, when the profits of slave-driving and slave-trading had laid the foundations for industrial capitalism, sugar again took a central role, as incentive, solace, and fuel for the new proletariat. Mintz believes that an appreciation of these points lay behind the British parliament's decisions in the early nineteenth century to abolish both colonial slavery and the system of protected colonial trade, effectively casting aside the original Caribbean sugar islands. Their staple was becoming too important in popular diet for provisioning to be left to a narrow monopoly. With free trade, from Cuba, Brazil and elsewhere, the London sugar price fell from fifty shillings to ten shillings a hundredweight between 1840 and 1900, while British sugar consumption per head rose fourfold, to supply a sixth of the national caloric intake. Factory operatives, male and female, lacking the time or resources to prepare decent meals, sustained themselves and their children with sweet tea, bread, jam and treacle. Most recently sugar has become a key ingredient in

the convenience foods which are promoted by business corporations, at the expense of social eating and family cohesion.

Very little of Mintz's main argument carries conviction. What did the late medieval dinner guest infer from an elaborate marzipan confection: the expression of political power, or one way in which the powerful might amuse themselves? We can only judge attitudes from events, and when European overseas expansion began it was gold, silver, spices and dyewoods that preoccupied the pioneers. The English spent their first two decades on Barbados trying to grow tobacco, before being converted to sugar by Dutch merchants and the disruption of competing supplies from Brazil. Thereafter sugar interests gained little leverage on national policy: they were no more than one competing pressure group among many. England never fought a war in order to acquire sugar colonies, although they sometimes came her way as an incidental result of conflicts begun for other reasons.

By degrees colonial production turned a luxury for the rich into a popular habit. Consequently, Mintz claims, the imitative desire for sugar helped to make British wage-earners more industrious, and to persuade their rulers that the poor might respond to material inducements. Important changes in economic attitudes clearly did occur during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but it is unlikely that sugar, by itself, took a decisive part in the process. Adam Smith, discussing incentives for the "common people", specified European foodstuffs, clothing, leather, soap and candles. During the 1840s sugar seems to have accounted for only about 5 per cent of

Lancashire working-class budgets, and labour efficiency was barely mentioned in the debate on the sugar duties.

The thesis of *Sweetness and Power* is illustrated mainly through the British experience. There are allusions to the "English sweet tooth": "like tea, sugar came to define English character". "Particularly for the working poor, eating more and more food with substantial amounts of sucrose in it was an appropriate response to what British society had become." Thus some international patterns mentioned briefly in the concluding chapter appear rather surprising. Since the 1930s Great Britain's rate of sugar intake – roughly 100–120 pounds per head per year – has been matched or exceeded within Europe by Ireland, Iceland, Denmark, Switzerland and the Netherlands. Through the rest of the region consumption has lagged behind. What else do Europe's leading sugar-eaters have in common? Perhaps the Irish preference should be attributed to British imperialism, but of the others, only the Danes and Dutch ever had colonies dedicated to sugar, or élites that might have fostered its use. Has sugar been an occupational necessity for Iceland's fishermen and Switzerland's watch-makers, as for Great Britain's millmades? There is an alternative explanation. Over the past century these six nations, unlike most of their neighbours, have usually recognized geographical logic by importing food on a large scale, rather than depending on protected domestic supplies, including costly sugar-beet.

With agricultural free trade, their consumers had access to cheaper sugar, and bought more as a result. Basic economics overrode wide differences in social structure.

## In an international light

Richard Davenport-Hines

A. HEERDING  
The History of N. V. Philips'  
Gloeilampenfabriek  
Volume 1: The origin of the Dutch  
incandescent lamp industry  
Translated by Derek S. Jordan  
343pp. Cambridge University Press. £30.  
0521321697

This intelligent but idiosyncratic book, originally published in Dutch in 1980, is the first of a projected three-volume history of the Eindhoven-based multinational, Philips. Gerard Philips opened his first incandescent lamp factory in 1891, but neither he nor his company are much in evidence in this opening volume: instead A. Heerding provides an account of the economic and technological development of the western European electrical industry in the twelve years after 1879. He is artless enough to confess that the book's discursive structure "was not part of a well conducted plan, but came about as a result of our researches", and the book lurches from antiquarianism to important discussions of the relations of industry and technological innovation.

The role of patents in the development of European electrical technology is stressed: Heerding re-tells, with original touches, the story of how Britain's lead in the early 1880s in producing incandescent lamps was lost in legal nutrition over patents, and in particular how British development was retarded by the monopoly which Edison and Swan were able to enforce through patent litigation until 1893. The Netherlands, in contrast, by 1890 had the second largest European lamp industry, after Germany, precisely because as a less industrialized nation it had rudimentary patent legislation: "monopolists" were unable to exercise "legal terrorism over small traders" or "to crush out all progress in hands other than their own". Heerding emphasizes the international character of incandescent lamp manufacturing from its outset, and shows the tense and complicated integration of the industry across the world through the patent structure. Surprisingly, although he describes Edison and Swan's ruthless assertion of their monopoly, he gives less detail to the inextinguishable and pitiless use of patents in German overseas marketing campaigns, although these soon assumed

a contentious political and diplomatic element.

Interesting points on entrepreneurship are made. "The success of a lamp maker" depended "not on secret processes but on good business management, not only in making but in selling the lamps", yet in the foundation phase in Britain, "electrical businesses had to be managed by men who were either scientific and unbusinesslike or businesslike and unscientific". This led to some notorious cases of failure. In contrast, only a few years later, Dutch entrepreneurs recognized the commercial opportunities which had been demonstrated elsewhere, imported foreign technical experts and reached equitable licensing terms with established manufacturers. Gerard Philips and others relied on family capital to finance their ventures, which were backed by merchants of an older generation, who seized the chance offered by the new technology to diversify investment from commercial or craft-based activities to industrial mass production. Heerding's approach to these subjects can be stimulating, but unfortunately they represent the acme of his book.

Heerding's previous excursion into business history was entitled *Cement in Nederland* and some of the characteristics of cement adhere to his Philips's history. There are too many heavy and unyielding chapters which induce a condition of coma. The detailed technical evolution of incandescent lamps in the 1880s, or the labyrinthine courses of Dutch municipal politics, are of little interest: yet Heerding treats them at length with a narrow but intense scholarship which will command more respect than readers. It is tedious too that the text is larded with litany of obscure but worthy engineers, investors and municipal councillors.

Prolific and indiscriminate as the bombastic excesses of so many other commissioned company histories, in which a frantic team of young researchers dredge up every fact and figure for an author who behaves like Albert Speer during the production crisis of the Nazi war economy, Heerding is mercifully unpretentious in his prose, which sometimes beguilingly conveys his enthusiasm for the subject. Although he is generally well served by the translator, Derek S. Jordan, there are signs in the final chapters that even he, later succumbed to moments of coma. Like other recent business histories from Cambridge University Press, the book is generously and delightfully illustrated.

## Futility in the family

D. J. Enright

M.E. SALTYSKY-SHCHEDRIN  
The Golovlevs  
Translated by I. P. Foote.  
316pp. Oxford University Press. Paperback, £3.55.  
0192816160  
The Pompadours: A satire on the art of government  
Translated by David Magarshack  
277pp. Ann Arbor: Ardis. £21.50 (paperback, £6.25).  
0882337422

Mikhail Evgrafovich Saltysky, who wrote under the name of Shchedrin, lived between 1826 and 1889, and is known – though perhaps not to many who actually know Swift – as the Russian Swift. Born into the landowning class, as a young civil servant he was exiled for seven years for what I. P. Foote calls "the too-liberal tone of an early story", but went on notwithstanding to occupy senior posts in the provincial administration.

In 1872 Saltysky began a series of sketches entitled "Well-Intentioned Speeches", whose aim was to expose the principles officially reckoned to constitute the bases of society – those of family, property and State. The sketches were then expanded into a novel, *The Golovlevs*, which appeared in 1880. This, Saltysky's major work, is the saga of three generations of an appalling family, consistently squalid in tenor, a sort of decayed *Dynasty* or *Dolus* with all the glamorous trimmings turned into their reverse.

*The Golovlevs* has the reputation of being the gloomiest novel in Russian literature; in Foote's words, it is "an unrelieved catalogue of misdeed and misery. No wholesome character, no act of decency, finds any place in the family chronicle." All but one of the Golovlevs die – the survivor lies unconscious in bed – and a critic has described the book as one long obituary. Whether the characters are ever alive in any normal sense of the word is in doubt. They have no pleasures except those of money-grubbing and getting the better of others; the less harassed among them fall into debt or embezzle regimental funds and kill themselves. There is a small measure of sex or sexual activity – though neither expression is quite apt. The central character, Porfiry Vladimirovich, known in the family as Iudushka ("Little Judas") or Bloodsucker, gets his housekeeper pregnant, mainly because she happens to be there. "Although he allowed fornication to be admissible within the bounds of strict necessity, he regarded amorous pastimes as a temptation of the Devil." It appears from the context that what "amorous pastimes" consist in is employing such terms as "darling" and "dearest". Even nature – the great outdoors – is customarily vile hereabouts.

Towards the end of the novel Saltysky sums up with surprising temperance. Three characteristic features have run through the family history: idleness, incapacity for any sort of activity, and hard drinking. "The first two had as their corollary empty tongues, empty minds, and empty hearts, while the third was by way of being an inevitable conclusion to the general shambles of their lives." How could one possibly go on reading such a book? But one does, drawn onwards by some grim, mysterious fascination. Foote mentions the mastery shown in the verbal battles between the characters, their diverse and distinctive linguistic styles; yet this, he observes, is bound to suffer in translation. Certainly some pathos surrounds the once vigorous and despotic matriarch, Arina Petrovna, when in age she becomes dependent on her remaining son. While she has pulled the family's finances together, she is in part responsible for its fate, and she has passed none of her qualities on.

And some enlivening variety is provided by the fall and rise of the conniving servant Ubushka, and by Bypraksyushka's nagging of Porfiry after he has sent her baby – their baby – away to a foundling home in Moscow. Porfiry's niece, Anninka and Lyubinka, escape from the putrefying family circle – only to be come actresses and then sink into the sordid existence of failed actresses. Lyubinka commits suicide. Anninka returns perforce to Golovlevs – "that was death itself, malign, empty-headed, it was death; ever watchful for

some fresh victim" – to quarrel drunkenly with her uncle, to raise the ghosts of the past, and finally to stir his conscience awake. Porfiry's is a death-bed repentance and yet, for as long as is given to it, a genuine one. Driven by the thought that he must beg forgiveness at his mother's grave, he walks out into a blizzard one night and is found dead the next morning.

Hypocrisy, we would guess, was Saltysky's chief abomination, and the power of *The Golovlevs* derives largely from its most repulsive person. Porfiry's uncending output of slimy moralizing can, as a peasant says, "fester a man's soul". It even deceives Porfiry himself; his talk is as futile as his life, whatever life he has outside talking, but it prevails by sheer volume, by its suffocating glibness. "God is merciful!" he proclaims, meaning that therefore he doesn't himself need to be. When Petenkin, pleading for money to cover his losses at gambling, reminds him that he is now his only son, Porfiry answers piously, "From Job, my boy, God took everything, but Job did not repine. He only said: 'God hath given, God hath taken away, Thy will be done, oh Lord.' Yes indeed, dear boy."

"And do you know why it is, Mother, that we are gentry-born? It's all because God had mercy on us. But for that, we'd be sitting now in some peasant hut, and there'd be no candle burning, just a rushlight. . . . And on, and so on. Porfiry is rich in senseless and sanctimonious homilies, and in aphorisms not always irrelevant to his preoccupations. "Haste trips on its own heels!" he tells Anninka, who is eager to leave the protection of her timorously lecherous uncle: "Hurry to a house on fire, but – praise God – we've no fire here!" And "God loves the truth and commands that we should love it too" is quickly followed by calculations on his counting-frame: "Figures are sacred, they never lie!"

Saltysky points out that Porfiry is not a true hypocrite in the mould of, say, Tartuffe: the latter kind is found only where society has clearly acknowledged bases. Porfiry, if he can properly be called a hypocrite, is "a hypocrite of the pure Russian type – that is, simply a man without any moral standard whatsoever and knowing no truth but that contained in copy-book axioms". In other countries, notably France, hypocrisy may well be a tribute that vice pays to virtue, but Porfiry knows very little

about virtue. For Russians are not educated in social morality: "we are simply left to grow on our own, like nettles by the wayside". As a result there are many more ignoramuses, liars and humbugs around than hypocrites. But whichever category Porfiry is consigned to, he must be its prime exemplar.

Foote's fluent new translation replaces the old Everyman version by Natalie Duddington. *The Pompadours* appears in English for the first time: a collection of satirical sketches, dating from between 1873 and 1886 (according to David Magarshack, though Foote dates them 1863–74), relating to provincial governors of the Russian Empire, or pompadours, and in some cases, since Saltysky had in mind the influence wielded by these women, their mistresses, the pompadours. We hear about the tricky business of praising a departing governor during a farewell dinner at which his successor is present: "in such cases one must be doubly careful both as regards the speeches and as regards the food and drinks". When an old pompadour retires, his pompadouress loses glory and honour "in the twinkling of a belpost"; in one story the lawful spouse, who had borne the title of "pompadouress's husband" without displaying the least arrogance, tries in vain to console the bereaved lady. Bowing to popular request, she takes on the incoming pompadour, and soon finds herself unable to tell the new one from the old.

If a governor's inaugural address to his subordinates is eloquent and long-winded but actually says nothing, so much the better. "All we want is just to fling words about because our tongues won't stop wagging. Consequently, speeches without a subject, predicate or conjunction are eminently proper in such a situation." One pompadour achieves fame by paying a fine of one rouble and 43 copecks straight out of his pocket when he could have insisted that the law was not made for him. Another runs mad, but the public do not notice his insanity any more than they noticed his liberalism when he was a Liberal: "they went on paying taxes, marrying and breaking the laws". A third sees "policy" in terms of a benevolent look and on occasional whipling. And it appears that when a pompadour is forced to retire, this happens not because of any offence or insufficiency on his part, but on account of "the new spirit of the times", a spirit

which itself comes into being not in order to correct any offence or insufficiency but because it is in the nature of things for the times to have a new spirit from time to time.

Magarshack claims that in these stories Saltysky turned his creative genius to an analysis of that timeless phenomenon, man's lust for power and dominion over his fellow men, and that the satire "is even more applicable today, since at no other time has man's passion to assert his power had at its command such deadly instruments of destruction". This claim, I must say, seems prompted by loyalty to the author rather than by the stories themselves, which are congested and repetitious and largely unfocused; they must have meant more at the time than they do now. The pompadours are grotesques, hardly distinguishable one from another, except that those in retirement are rather more active than those in office. It is futility and triviality that loom large, not power or its abuse.

Far superior, and truly timeless, I would say, are Saltysky's *Fables*. Veru Volkhovsky's 1931 translation of which was reissued in America in 1977. In *The Pompadours* we are told of the general fondness for speaking French, which however is mostly a "curious hotchpotch of the horrible Paris café-chantant jargon and the no less horrible jargon of the Paris *cocottes*". More pointed, as well as more amusing, is a passage from one of the fables, "A Village Fire". Despite her seductively displayed bust, the widowed lady of the manor has told herself once and for all, "Ni, ni, c'est fini", and devoted herself to her children, "C'est une sainte", society says of her: she is a "fière marâtre". Like all Russian ladies, she speaks French: she "knew *un peu d'Arithmétique, un peu de Géographie, et un peu de Mythologie* (*cette pauvre Léda!*), had lived much abroad, and had lately become a patriot and taken to loving 'the good Russian people'".

Assuming that we shall condemn the greater evils of our own record, in the *Fables* Saltysky addresses himself to the lesser evils, the "good intentions". In "The Carp who was an Idealist" the Carp is a good liberal, a progressive and humane thinker, advocating a Fishes' Commonwealth. He believes in peaceful coexistence, prosperity achieved through rational harmony. But alas the Pike insists on feeding off poor innocent carp – which is patently unjust since the Carp restricts himself to shellfish, and "the shellfish hasn't a soul – only a mist; you eat shellfish and it doesn't understand. And it's constructed so that you can't help but swallow it. You draw in water with your mouth and straightaway your throat is clogged with shellfish."

In his impressions of Russia, an "eminent foreigner" writes that the chief pompadours are generally chosen from young men who are good at physical exercises. "Not much attention is paid to their education or mental development, because it is assumed that they have nothing to do except govern." He imagines there must be an additional reason, namely that by and large the authorities consider learning to have a disintegrating effect on character, and hence to be out of place "where freshness of outlook and a fearless disregard of obstacles are required". This view ties in with the national ignorance Saltysky spoke of in *The Golovlevs*, and both works could be held to show how ripe Russia was for a revolution which wouldn't solve its problems.

*Pushkin on Literature* translated and edited by Tatiana Wolff, first published in 1971 and reviewed in the TLS of 4 June, 1971, has recently appeared in a revised edition with an introductory essay by John Boylston (554pp. Athlone. £40.0485 112973). The volume not only contains Pushkin's critical essays, but also selected extracts from letters, diaries and notes on literary topics, arranged chronologically with a biographical introduction to each of the six sections. Many of the topics discussed concern English and French authors and a short-title catalogue of non-Russian books in Pushkin's library is given. Bayley writes: "By taking us through his development as a reader, as a *connoisseur* of literature, Tatiana Wolff helps to give us the best insight on him as a writer. Her invaluable book brings together all the scattered evidence . . . which together add up to a unique portrait of Pushkin as a literary man."

## Brecht: A Worker Reads and Asks

for Dave Griffiths

Who built Thebes with his seven gales?

Books say it was kings.

Did kings hew and haul the rock?

And Babylon razed again and again,

who rebuilt it again and again? Where

in gilded Lima did the builders live?

When the Great Wall of China was finished

and it was evening, where did the masons go?

Monuments commemorate Roman victories. Who

carved them? Who lost when the Caesars won?

Did the Byzantine alive only in palaces

and poems? Even when Atlantis sank

into myth, the sea had to drown

men howling for their slaves.

The young Alexander conquered India.

On his own?

Caesar smote the Gauls.

Wasn't there at least a cook with him?

Philip of Spain wept when his armada

went to the bottom. Did no one else weep?

Frederick the Great won the Seven Years War. Who

won beside him?

A victory per page.

Who cooked the victory feast?

A great man per decade.

Who paid the bill?

So much to read.

So much to ask.

OLIVER REYNOLDS



## A genuinely different genre

David Grylls

ZOHARSHAVIT  
Poetics of Children's Literature  
200pp. University of Georgia Press £23.90.  
08203 0790-4

"I have never liked children's books very much. I don't read very many", confessed Jane Gardam in 1978. Children's literature has always had an inferior status, as even children's authors have tacitly acknowledged. In *Poetics of Children's Literature* Zohar Shavit, a lecturer in Poetics and Comparative Literature, asks why this should be so. How did children's literature originate and what was its relationship with popular adult fiction? What features characterize the form and what are the typical differences between classic and commercial texts?

Shavit brings to the analysis of such questions a formidable battery of structuralist techniques. Her intention is "the understanding of children's literature . . . as an integral part of the literary polysystem". Whether Enid Blyton can be usefully elucidated by concepts derived from Tynjanov and Jakobson might be doubted by non-semantic readers, and certainly there is little naturally compelling in Shavit's heavy-footed prose. Relieved of its linguistic uniform, however, her argument stands out distinctly enough. Accepting Philippe Ariès's famous thesis that childhood was not "discovered" until the seventeenth century, she connects the emergence of books for children with the widespread establishment of schools, and argues that children's literature, anxious for the welfare of its recipients, has always been intimately linked with an educational system. Children are presumed to have separate needs and different capacities from adults – though conceptions of these alter over time, as Shavit shows by tracing the changing guises of *Red Riding Hood*.

Defining what she calls "the children's system", Shavit makes use of two oppositions: between adult and children's literature and between "canonized" and "non-canonized" work (the latter terms are employed throughout, even in such startling formulations as "canonized commercial publishers"). Children's literature, Shavit argues, has a lowly status analogous to that of non-canonized adult literature, which in several ways it resembles. Children's literature, however, is genuinely different – governed by conventions which Shavit hunts down through a series of textual comparisons.

The conventions of the children's system are due to "the specific addressee" – the child. But in practice children's authors are required to appeal simultaneously to both children and adults. In Shavit's view, there are broadly two responses to this contradictory obligation. The first is to make the child a mere pretext and to aim the work instead at an adult audience. This procedure is characteristic, Shavit claims, of those canonized children's books, the classics, which tend to be "ambivalent texts", comprehensible on different levels because of their skillful transcendence of existing literary models. The second response is to ignore adult judgment and court the enthusiasm of juvenile readers – the procedure of popular and commercial authors whose products are frowned on by adult arbiters but greedily devoured by children. To illuminate the "ambivalent" text Shavit discusses *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*; to exemplify non-canonized literature she analyzes Enid Blyton.

A final section on "System and History" advances the structuralist argument that all children's literatures develop through virtually identical stages. Broadly speaking, canonized children's literature grows out of an educational framework: the first official books for children are ABCs, primers, manuals. As new educational doctrines emerge, children's books evolve and the canonized system becomes heterogeneous (moral tales, animal fables, later, fairy-stories and fantasies).

*Poetics of Children's Literature* raises a host of interesting questions but has some severe limitations. Though attached to a theoretical tradition that seeks to accommodate temporal process, Shavit is shaky as a literary historian. A sudden eruption of minor errors disfigures her historical sections. It isn't simply, though, that she misspells the surnames of Hannah

More and Sarah Trimmer or refers to the hero of *Sandford and Merton* as Harvey rather than Harry. It is rather that the historical concepts she deploys are floundering and generalized: "the official system", the "elite", the "high-brows", "the canonized children's literature establishment" – Shavit's view of history is overshadowed by such menacing but amorphous shapes. Remarkably, a thought-provoking synthesis emerges even from these historical simplicities.

A second limitation of Shavit's method is that it forbids her to do things which she never less wishes to do. "This study deals with . . . structures and not with interpretations", she announces proudly at the outset. The idea that in the case of a literary text any kind of structure could be discerned without the help (however humble) of interpretation seems peculiarly naive; and before long Shavit is talking happily of structures that "make no sense" except on a certain reading. A similar embarrassment attends her attempts to concentrate on texts and exclude authors. She erects a wire-



An illustration to *The Death Shore* by Thomas Mayne Reid (1819-1883), which can be seen in *The World of Adventure*, an exhibition of English and German adventure stories at the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood until September 21.

## Escape from escapism

T. J. Binyon

MARGERY FISHER  
*The Bright Face of Danger: An exploration of the Adventure Story*  
440pp. Hodder and Stoughton, £12.95.  
034022993-4

This splendid book is at the same time a critique of the adventure story, a taxonomy of the genre, and an assessment of a few hundred examples, rising along one axis from Conrad to Enid Blyton, and along another from Defoe to the present day. Margery Fisher begins by combating – as she does throughout the book – the all-pervasive critical view of the adventure story as inferior, "escapist" literature, which for some indefinable reason cannot be taken seriously. She sees the genre as offering not an escape from, but an enlargement of life through imagination, and quotes in support of its seriousness Ford Madox Ford's robust appraisal of Marryat, undoubtedly a writer of adventure stories rather than serious novels:

I have seldom been so impressed as when, the other day, I reread *Peter Simple* for my pleasure. It was to come into contact with a man who could write and see and feel. For me, nothing in *War and Peace* is as valuable as the boat-cutting-out expeditions of Marryat and for me he remains the greatest of English novelists.

The author continues by grouping the adventure story under various headings. Marryat leads naturally into the story, followed by the quest novel, *Ruritanian*, the Jacobite theme. The spy story and cops-and-robbers bring us up to date, and attention is then turned to characters: the hero; the heroine and the villain; to place; the frontier; Robinson Crusoe Islands; the description of the setting; and finally to attitude: of the author – nationalism and patriotism – and of the critic – conservatism and the impoverishment of vocabulary.

mesh of "norms", "models" and "systems" behind which human beings can scarcely be glimpsed. This results not only in a strangely reifying style (ascribing potency to the "attitudes" of social "factors") but also in disconcerting break-outs into biographical speculation. Discussing *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, she reminds us that Carroll wrote an earlier version, *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, and a later one, *The Nursery Alice*. Only the famous version, she contends, enjoys the features of an "ambivalent text" – parody, conflation of existing models, and blurred boundaries between fantasy and reality. As it happens, virtually all the effects she examines are also present in the earlier version (admittedly in smaller quantities), but Shavit is so confident about her distinction that she increasingly locates it in Carroll's own mind. Of the second version she states confidently: "Carroll was dissatisfied with the fact that it was not 'ambivalent enough'."

The most interesting parts of Shavit's book are those that define the typical constraints

imposed by children's literature. A section on translations (which includes snidgements and adaptations) suggests that while unusual liberties are granted to translators of children's literature (they cut, interpolate, and peddle their own doctrines), they must also conform to strict tacit rules. Adapters of books for children's consumption invariably shorten and simplify; normally extirpate irony and ambiguity; and remould the text to make it comply with stock models in the children's system. Shavit cites the case of *Gulliver's Travels*, and then convert satire into fantasy and adventure by turning the Lilliputians into wonderful dwarfs. Similarly, Shavit outlines a comparison between Roald Dahl's story "The Champion of the World" and the version he wrote later as a novel for children, *Danny the Champion of the World*. Though neglecting to mention numerous verbal changes (always towards simplicity and euphemism), Shavit persuasively identifies the major structural realignments. In *Danny* the narrative angle is altered; the narrator's shifting consciousness being supplanted by a straightforward linear sequence; the activity of poaching is legitimized, ambiguity giving way to approval; and an ominously "open" ending is replaced by a closed "happy" ending. Given these perceptions, it is curious that Shavit fails to spot the transformed significance of the title. In the child's version the title phrase is applied to a different character: a different spirit – eulogistically rather than ironically. The title of the adult story is ironic: that of the children's novel, honorific.

An unintended – and unfortunate – consequence of Zohar Shavit's systematic study is that it tends to explain all too well why children's literature has been lowly regarded. Her book consistently describes children's literature in terms of its taboos and limitations. At no point are we given any impression of the distinctive opportunities the form affords. Nor does Shavit ever distinguish carefully between the varying levels of complexity available for different age-groups. Although her book opens by indignantly sketching "the blatant disregard for children's literature", it ends up looking suspiciously like the portrayal of an inferior species.

once (*Rollin the Reeler* and other stories of naval midshipmen). But to make them the machinations of would-be world despots, discover uranium mines, unmask enemy agents, or outdo the police in foiling a gang of bank-robbers is to introduce an unconsciously element into what might already be an implausible plot. *Emil and the Detectives* is of course exempt from this criticism since to expose the criminal Herr Grondels it uses – as do its many imitators – children in children's clothes. Her solution is for children to read about adventure stories (which of course they have long been doing); a solution which becomes ever more important as, under the malign influence of television, critics, librarians, and even some authors, narration, scene-setting and description become ever bolder and less satisfying; certain themes, subjects and attitudes are banned as reactionary; and classics of the genre are gutted, bowdlerized and rewritten to remove the stigma of being "elliptical" or "a minority road". She rightly pours acid scorn on a recent abridged and rewritten version of *Treasure Island* produced in the belief that "the side story long and difficult book lies about, easily bored, waiting to be liberated". The edge is given to her anger by her conviction, constantly expressed, that the true adventure story must be – and is in its best examples – much more than merely a rapid succession of events. There is room in it for the description and development of character, for the creation of atmosphere, for the establishment of a sense of place. In short, for most of the characteristics of the serious novel, plus, of course, a variety of the serious novel, plus, of course, a variety of the serious novel.

Throughout Mrs. Fisher's comments are luminous and her analysis is acute. Her book, as absorbing in its way as *Sophy of Knoxville*, will not only point most readers towards a study of our authors and titles; it should be read together with Roger and the Authors and the Authors' Dictionary, be put into the hands of any one aspiring to write (or talk) fiction.

## Doing it by hand

John Chadwick

ROY HARRIS  
The Origin of Writing  
166pp. Duckworth, £12.95.  
071562074-6

The Cherokee of North America, seeing for the first time the white man's magic of writing, named written documents "talking leaves". To the illiterate person there is something incomprehensible and therefore magical about producing speech by looking at marks on paper. Yet he can respond verbally as well as we can to pictures. What then is so special about writing?

Roy Harris has produced a thought-provoking book, an enquiry into the hypothetical process which led to the invention of writing. There cannot of course be a written history of events which preceded the invention, and linguists have generally been content to study the earliest known scripts and to reconstruct their prehistory by extrapolation and imagination.

The earliest Chinese signs looked like the object they signified; the sign for "moon", for instance, was originally a crescent. But in course of time they developed into unrecognizable patterns. The same process can be seen in Sumerian and other early ideographic scripts, so it looks like a universal law. Writing must therefore have started by drawing pictures of visible objects. But how do you draw a picture of something you can't see? The Chinese solved this problem by a variety of devices. A "month", for instance, can be written with the same sign as "moon". But this was natural, because in Chinese the same word is used for "moon" and "month". Verbs, being words that describe a process, present a special difficulty. The Chinese took the sign for the "eye", added a pair of legs to denote activity, and produced a sign for "to see".

A second principle well attested by historical examples is the rebus. This is familiar in heraldry, where the arms of the City of Oxford display oxen and a river. So too in a script of this kind, we might use a picture of a bee to write the verb *be*. Egyptian hieroglyphs are full of such examples. A further stage in development is when the "bee" sign is used not merely for *be*, but for any syllable sounding like it, as in *be-lief*. This leads ultimately to the creation of phonetic scripts, in which the meanings of the signs are discarded, and they are used exclusively for their sound. The result is a syllabary, a collection of signs each of which can be pronounced and used to build up longer words.

At a later stage we find alphabets, where the syllables have been analysed into their apparent constituents. This has the immense advantage that the number of signs can be much reduced, thus making them easier to learn, to read and to write.

All of this is well known and recognized by Harris. What he is seeking to do in this book, however, is to substitute an intuitive for a historical approach, which he regards as a fundamental error: "The result is total inability to see that the question is as much a question about our own understanding of language in the present as about the practices of our cultural ancestors in the remote past." Thus he attacks the evolutionary view of writing outlined above, because he detects in it a teleological fallacy, as if the alphabet were the ultimate goal towards which all earlier systems were advancing. No linguist would subscribe to such a view. The alphabet is superior to the syllabary because it is more efficient. In this sense there has been evolution towards more efficient writing systems. Yet in practice not all languages employ alphabets, but to understand why we need to look at another of Harris's targets.

*Homo sapiens* learned to talk tens of thousands of years before he learned to write. Speech is historically anterior to writing; but is it necessarily logically prior? Is this normal assumption of linguists, that writing is recorded speech, really valid? Harris, observing that our thinking is conditioned by the way we were taught as children to read and write, rises to two objections.

One is that even alphabetic writing is not really phonetic. If it were, it would be impossible for speakers of English to disagree over the pronunciation of words like *grass* or *rather*. In fact the written language achieves a degree of standardization which facilitates communication between speakers of different dialects. We do not have to analyse our speech carefully in order to write; we follow, if we are sufficiently educated, the received spelling of the word, even if it differs considerably from our pronunciation of it. This argument, true as it is, takes us nowhere. It is a fallacy to suppose that the alphabetic spelling of a word "represents" the sound. It is no more or less than a notation, sufficient to enable the reader to recognize and therefore reproduce the word orally. In order to read a written text we need to interpret the written marks, just as a pianist confronted with a piece of sheet music does not merely strike the notes indicated, but adds his own interpretation.

Harris's second objection is more subtle. The written form is not simply an automatic reflex to speech; it has a life of its own. For instance, we often find it impossible to construct a complicated argument without writing it down. Language has developed in consequence of writing in ways which would have been unlikely, if not impossible, had it remained merely oral. This is a sound objection. Curiously, Harris does not mention spelling pronunciation, words which have acquired a new spoken form under the influence of the written form, like the American pronunciation of *Derby*. The points he makes are less obvious, but none the less valid. But the fact that the artefact influences the orificer does not make it any the less an artefact. Might not a computer defect at chess the grandmaster who taught it to play the game?

Harris thus arrives at the position that speech and writing are parallel manifestations of language, neither being superior. But this leads him back to the problem of how writing arose. Pictures can serve as restricted means of communication, and in an elementary (and artificial) situation can substitute for language. But as soon as the message to be conveyed becomes more complicated, either the pictures by becoming more detailed cease to correspond to the linguistic form, or they need to become symbols for words not things. The red traffic light is not a symbol for the word "stop"; it is itself a command to stop. But only a small number of messages can be encoded by anything as simple as a set of traffic lights. Any wider variation needs to be expressed linguistically, and thus by a series of signs which correspond to words of a spoken language.

This is not a book for the casual reader, who may find the technical language tough going, but it is rewarding for the student.

This is one of the clearest ways there is of presenting the melodic pattern of a language, and it has long been favoured by Bolinger. The line follows the melodic movement of the voice, as in music, with the exception that the pitch levels are relative, not absolute, and the units of greatest prominence are given recent marks. It is easier to read such examples than most other notations, but still quite difficult to "translate" these visual shapes into heard melodies, and to relate them to the various emotional and social contexts in which they are used.

But the effort is well worth while, especially with a book of this calibre. *Intonation and its Parts* is the first volume of a projected two-part work, and it brings together more than forty years of the author's own thoughts on the subject. Bolinger has written dozens of perceptive articles on the nature of intonation, especially in English (notwithstanding his position as Professor of Romance Languages and Literature at Harvard). His constructive criticism of pretty well every major theory since the Second World War has helped immeasurably

## The ups and downs

David Crystal

DWIGHT BOLINGER  
Intonation and Its Parts: Melody in spoken English  
421pp. Edward Arnold, £35.  
07131 6458-1

Intonation has, on the whole, received a bad press from linguists and lay-persons alike. It has been called the "grosby" part of speech, the "Cinderella of the linguistic sciences", the "left-over of the voice", the "most difficult and neglected" dimension of language teaching and learning – and other unsavoury things. Yet the innocent saying which is widely quoted to explain intonation, and which Dwight Bolinger gives to introduce his major new investigation, gives no hint of a difficulty: "It ain't what you say, but the way that you say it" is immediately understood by everyone. Why, then, is there a problem?

Part of the reason becomes obvious as soon as one opens this book. It is extraordinarily difficult to get the subject-matter down on the page, and thus to be sure what we are talking about. The reader is faced with hundreds of examples taken from everyday English, typographically presented:

I'm gonna have to get this bound up me-ter that bound up me-

This is one of the clearest ways there is of presenting the melodic pattern of a language, and it has long been favoured by Bolinger. The line follows the melodic movement of the voice, as in music, with the exception that the pitch levels are relative, not absolute, and the units of greatest prominence are given recent marks. It is easier to read such examples than most other notations, but still quite difficult to "translate" these visual shapes into heard melodies, and to relate them to the various emotional and social contexts in which they are used.

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## The days of Snobol and goto

Geoffrey Sampson

CHRISTOPHER BUTLER  
Computers in Linguistics  
266pp. Oxford: Blackwell, £27.50  
(paperback, £9.95).  
0631 42665

Computational Linguistics is a fast-growing area of the academic scene, thanks to the fact that the information technology industry is now investing heavily in language-related activities such as automatic speech synthesis and analysis, machine translation, and the use of ordinary language for interrogating electronic data-bases. Few of those matters, though, are mentioned in Christopher Butler's *Computers in Linguistics*, which might more accurately have been titled "Computers in Literary Studies". Butler is chiefly interested in the use of computational techniques for analysing literary style, and even when he discusses a relatively "practical" area such as computer-assisted language teaching, a high proportion of the projects he quotes involve languages such as Ancient Greek and Sumerian. In fact less than a third of the book surveys the scene in literary computing. The bulk of it consists of a straightforward textbook, with exercises, on Snobol, a relatively little-known programming language which was designed to be convenient for manipulating textual data as opposed to numbers or tables.

This is a remarkably old-fashioned book. Butler discusses input to computers by means of punch-cards and paper tape, which few students in the 1980s are likely ever to have seen; more important, none of the language-analysis techniques that he discusses in detail go beyond the simple word-counting approaches which were already routine in the 1960s – a very distant era in a discipline whose entire history has lasted only forty years. (The old-world atmosphere extends even to the illustrations of computer-generated output, most of which are printed in capitals, as in the days when line-printers lacked lower-case letters.) The book stands or falls according to its value as a programming textbook; but only Butler's antiquarian cast of mind, surely, can have prompted the choice of Snobol as the language taught. Compared to other languages available twenty years ago, Snobol had great advantages for the linguist; but by modern standards it is thoroughly out of date. (Computerwise readers will appreciate the damning implications of the fact that its only looping mechanism is a form of *goto*.) What was good in Snobol has been incorporated into modern languages such as Icon, which are more likely to be available in the institutions where today's novice computational linguists will find themselves working. It may be a besetting sin of computer specialists to care too much about being up-to-the-minute with the very latest technology, but in this book Butler goes altogether too far in the other direction.

in the subject's progress. Now at last he has put all his ideas about intonation together into a book.

Bolinger holds a more "absolute" view of intonation than many other linguists. He finds meaning in the melodic form of the utterance – conveying affective or emotional, rather than logical or grammatical, meaning. The basic distinction within intonation, of "up" vs "down" in pitch, he sees as a central, primitive drive mechanism: "up" signals increased tension, or arousal; "down", reduced tension, or coming-to-rest. These are universal features of expression, and it is this universality which needs to be recognized, argues Bolinger, if we are to explain the remarkable similarities between the intonation patterns of the world's languages. Intonation, he claims, comes closest to the innate linguistic capacities of primitive man. Nor is it just the voice which goes up and down; it is accompanied by synchronized movements of the head, eyes, eyebrows and body (try, for instance, making the pitch rise for a question and simultaneously bowing your head – it isn't easy), so it is not surprising to find an important chapter on intonation and gesture in the middle of the book.

The book is written in a very accessible style, and has thousands of well-chosen examples of intonational form and function. Bolinger first presents the formal patterns systematically, then refers to their function (as signals of class, discourse, grammar, emotion, and so on) for corroboration. The first three introductory chapters are written informally, and include basic "ear training" (or rather, "ear-eye" training) for the neophyte. This is cleverly done, relying heavily on the well-known, melodically stereotyped expressions of English (such as the melodies of calling, taunting and cursing) to familiarize readers with the transcription and interpretations.

The remaining nine chapters go into matters in detail, dealing with the basic contours and functions of the melody of words, or accentual prosody; and with the way in which the pitch profiles of words and phrases combine into complete intonation contours, or melodic prosody. Bolinger is at his most illuminating and persuasive in his illustrations, all taken from carefully observed, everyday speech situations; and in the process he regularly produces something fresh. For instance, there is a fascinating section on variations in the length of syllables, in which he argues for the principle that the less frequent and familiar an expression in everyday language the slower it will be said (as in the more common *lawful vs lawfully*). Then there is the question of why we change the stress in polysyllabic words (as in the literal *astronomical budget* vs the hyperbolic *astronomical budget*); or the way in which we make semantically special cases stand out by stress (cf. *GASoline*, referring to contents, but *gasoline*, when giving a warning). In the same chapter one can also discover, *inter alia*, why Jimmy Carter said *temporarily* on April 14, 1977; and in the next, Bolinger explains why we say *STEAM engine*, yet *steam LOCOMOTIVE*; *SEA voyage*, yet *ocean VOYAGE*.

Specialist readers are well served too. The author's own analysis of the English vowel system (recognizing two grades of vowel, full and reduced) is given in detail in an appendix, as part of an explanation of how syllables are timed, and thus of how English rhythm works. (The integration of intonation with rhythm is an important feature of Bolinger's approach.) And there is plenty left to argue about. For instance, his account of the neurolinguistics of intonation is over-simple: he claims that intonation is mainly located in the right hemisphere of the brain, but I think it is more likely to be a case of bilateral representation (especially in view of the many "tone" languages in the world, where the left hemisphere is certainly involved). And there are many points of detailed interpretation which will keep experts nagging happily for weeks.

As Bolinger remarks in his preface, "intonation is too important a subject to be left just to linguists". Invoking the interests of psychologists, musicologists, anthropologists, writers and even jurists (given the attention they pay to words, which the tone of voice may effectively – though not legally – contradict). If any book on intonation is likely to appeal to all these various interests, it is this one.



# Songs of a fighting man

D. D. R. Owen

WILLIAM D. PADEN, TILDE SANKOVITCH and PATRICIA H. STÄBLEIN (Editors)  
The Poems of the Troubadour Bertran de Born  
573pp. University of California Press. £55.25.  
0 520042972

After many years of relative neglect, the troubadours are back in fashion: and new scholarly editions are appearing, supplied with translations for the benefit of those whose command of Old Provençal is less than early editors took for granted. Bertran de Born is particularly favoured, the present handsome volume having been narrowly preceded by a critical edition and translation by Gérard Gouiran, which appeared last year from the University of Provence under the title of *L'Amour et la guerre*. In it the Padén-Sankovitch-Stäblein work is noted as forthcoming.

The two editions have more in common than the poems themselves (of which one or two, of doubtful authenticity, appear only in one or the other): both contain well-researched accounts of Bertran's life and social status, his literary tastes and relationships, his passions and prejudices, and an assessment of his art. Although only one of his poems has been preserved with its melody, both works give a selection of scores to which others could have been set. There are some major differences. The American editors, for instance, are less generous with variant readings and give only those needed to support emendations from the base MSS, their aim being to provide a single authentic reading for each poem. Nor, unlike Gouiran, do they include the *ridos* and *rozos*, those spurious accounts of Bertran's life and the circumstances behind his songs which helped to turn the man into a myth for later generations. They are, however, discussed and described, as are the handful of miniatures found in the *chansonniers*. A review of Bertran's later, somewhat patchy, literary reputation concludes with half-a-dozen pages on Ezra Pound's "poetic communion" with him.

The swaggering lord of Autafort might have been surprised at this upsurge of interest in his compositions, for he sometimes speaks as though his songs were a mere pastime, thrown off to cheer himself up in the face of harsh reality. Professional hacks he despised, rating them no higher than mercenary soldiers. Significantly, perhaps, no historical document referring to him contains a hint that he was a poet. Yet he might well have felt flattered by this attention, because, despite his claim to spend little time on his poems ("I make 'em without the least effort"), he is a first-class and surely painstaking technician, even an innovator who left his mark on others. Admired especially for his *shreves*, poems on moral, political or satirical themes, he does not fool us with his casual remark: "I've made a *serventes* where not a word misseas the mark, and it never cost me a garlick clove." He knew well enough, and vaunted, the power of his songs as weapons against his enemies or goads for the timid and irresolute.

Bertran scarcely conforms to the popular image of the troubadour as a pining lover spinning romantic fantasies around the figure of a real or imagined mistress. The editors here speak of "the ancillary theme of love" in his poems; and it is true that only six are devoted exclusively to love, though about half of them have passing references to it. He is capable of affecting the courtly lover stance, as in his largely Platonic eulogy to Henry II's daughter Matilda, or when he claims to prefer the secret joy and fears of love to worldly power and possessions. Yet in the first case a practical motive no doubt lurks behind his blandishments, and the context of the second is his castigation of a too reticent lover. Elsewhere, having implausibly blamed his own timidity in an affair, he drops his pretence: "I'm no lover, nor do I care enough about love to approach a lady or ask her for it, nor do I court." With that he turns to his favourite topic of power-politics and warfare, on which his modern notoriety largely rests.

"I'm so damn tough that the alreeds of war cling to me", he boasts (the translation has its racy monocoils). "I comfort myself and keep myself amused with war and the journeying, giv-

ing and flirring." Here is the machismo of the larger-than-life Bertran, whose career of intriguing, feuding (not least with his own brother) and leaguings for and against great nobles and princes, notably in stormy Plantagenet circles, is helpfully unravelled for us in the introduction. He revels in conjuring up the grim sights and sounds of battle. Like Roland and other epic heroes he admires, he seems debilitated peace, as he assures no less a lord than Richard Lionheart. But if there is more than a touch of Roland about him, he had the poetic soul of a medieval Cyranos; and the editors see his whole art as "integrating the disparate registers of epic and lyric, real and ideal".

An idealist he was, extolling the robust vigour of youth, displaying a frankness and generosity of spirit that he often missed among his contemporaries, longing for a society that prized noble virtues refined in the fires of war. Beneath all his flamboyance we glimpse too a sincere religious faith and Christian charity: so it is fitting that, like another of his crusading heroes, Guillaume d'Orange, he should have ended his life in a monk's habit. It was, though, in Hell that Dante encountered Bertran's shade, swinging his scathed head like a lantern, damned for having sown discord in his lifetime. More reassuring is the penitential poem, if it is his, which begins: "When I reflect and consider what I am, and whence I came, I cross myself and I am much amazed how patient God has been, for so long, with my faults."

The editors' judicious and wide-ranging study, their critical aids (including a schedule of historical sources, an ample bibliography, textual notes, and a glossary as well as the translation) and the poems themselves, scrupulously edited, afford us both the opportunity and the incentive to make or pleasurably renew our acquaintance with this warrior-troubadour. The presentation is as lavish as the price might suggest, the format square and solid as a medieval keep, the cover, appropriately, the colour of dried blood.

## Unloading the syllables

A. F. L. Beeston

CHARLES GREVILLE TUETEY  
Classical Arabic Poetry: 162 poems from Imru'qays to Ma'arri  
300pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £18.  
0 7103 01103

Anyone producing translations from Arabic poetry into English runs the hazard of setting himself up in competition with the admirable renderings of C. J. Lyell, C. G. Tuetey's volume, covering the first 500 years of extant Arabic poetry, is probably as good as anything done since Lyell, and, certainly better than some of the attempts that have got into print in the last three decades or so.

Nevertheless, for the general reader it has three drawbacks. Each of the 162 pieces is called a poem, though the introduction in several cases notes that only a part of the original poem is given; where there is no such note in the introduction, the reader is left in the dark as to whether the piece is a complete poem or on extract. This is specially unfortunate today, when there is an increasing interest in the principle of structural unity of a poem as a whole. Here too, I must express regret that Tuetey contributes to perpetuating an old misconception by writing that the "line" of Arabic poetry (corresponding to two lines of his English) is "always a syntactically complete unit — a rule that was never abandoned throughout classical poetry". In fact, the norm (and even this norm is occasionally transgressed) is that at the end of a line the hearer should not be kept in suspense waiting for a syntactic completion in the next line; but it is extremely common for a line not to be syntactically independent of the preceding line.

Second, (again apart from some random notes in the introduction), there is no explanatory commentary at all, though this is an indispensable aid to comprehension of the literature of an alien culture. For example, "All the march and the drive have folded their ways as the Hadrami merchants double their ways" is surely quite unintelligible without the informa-

## Moods for music

Nigel Wilkins

MARGARET LOUISE SWITTEN  
The Causes of Raimon de Miraval: A study of poems and melodies  
247pp. Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America.  
0910956 820

Raimon de Miraval is not the best known of troubadours, but he is important for the relatively large number of his *causos* which have survived — thirty-seven — and also because, of these, the exceptionally high number of twenty-two have retained their monodic musical setting in some of the manuscript sources. The texts had all been edited with a modern French translation by Leslie Topsfield in 1971; Margaret Louise Switten gives accurate English translations with an extremely full introduction and commentary, often dependent on Topsfield, but in many ways complementing the earlier edition. Switten's presentation seems to be dictated very much more by head than by heart. One lacks the dramatic impact of the Provencal *ridos* and *razos* which related Raimon's rise to fame from impoverished circumstances, his passionate involvement with many women, and above all how he was deceived in vengeance by one who persuaded him to leave his wife but then married someone else. It is the texts themselves, very much the lesser part of Switten's edition, which convey Raimon's fluctuating moods from total abjectness to hardy insult. "Que desiran deu hom d'amor jausi!" — for one who desires should enjoy love — he declares, though merely to serve is better than to be turned away. At other times he openly sues for sexual favours, or rejects a "lady for sale" who prefers suitors with money.

It is a pity Switten omits the fifteen *causos* lacking music, since they are needed to fill in the picture. Fine analysis of the text and music dominates her approach. In many ways the

edition is a model of method, and one can understand why it took some fifteen years to prepare. The discussion of textual meanings, curiously, conveys much less direct feeling of what Raimon has to say, after meticulous though laboured analysis of key words such as *joi*, *pretz*, *solatz*. Small units lead to big units, rigorous progression: word, line, stanza, song. Syntax and versification are thoroughly taken apart.

The greatest merit of Switten's edition is perhaps that it takes the music fully into consideration, something rarely done in the past, but now gradually winning acceptance. Many literary critics still need to be reminded: many have melodies. Switten has the rare ability to cope with both sides of the double art without seeking a collaborator, and displays evident competence, though her analyses of melodic structure are sometimes a little forced. She does, however, follow the "declamatory rhythm" free-transcription method advocated by H. van der Werf, denying rhythmic structure to medieval monody, despite convincing recent criticism. When *trouvare* songs appear quoted in measure in contemporary polyphonic motets, and such as Adam de la Halle's music of both types, it is hard to believe that troubadour and *trouvare* melodies lacked rhythmic shape. The evidence of folk-song supports the idea of pulse, and it is most unlikely that the *causos* behaved differently from the dance songs which rub shoulders with them. It seems just as unlikely that twelfth and thirteenth-century secular song should have totally differed from that of the later Middle Ages, where new types of notation made rhythms completely clear. Switten's description of an ideal performer "who knows the language and is steeped in its traditions" really only fits a singer of the time and the "vital effects achieved through performance based on imperfect knowledge, with no practical suggestions as to rhythm from the presumably more experienced editor, often sound more Californian than Occitan.

tion that the main export from South Arabia to central Arabia was textiles, so that "double" means "fold for packing".

Third, to me at least, the rhythms used by Tuetey are tedious and distasteful. In by far the majority of cases the subtle varieties of Arabic metres appear here in an English form with four stresses to each line (half-line of the Arabic), and a heavy dominance of anapaestic rhythms: as in the above quoted example, and (on p83) "To the banners, the desert, the night I am known — to the sword, to the lance, to the paper and pen". Tuetey's observation in the introduction that "classical Arabic is a polysyllabic language, English tends to be monosyllabic. To translate Arabic with the same number of syllables would therefore for the most part involve tiresome 'padding' to stretch the English line" — just does not work. Quite apart from the extremely fallacious contrast between a polysyllabic Arabic and a monosyllabic English, anyone with experience in translating knows that there is no problem about "padding": the difficulty is rather to compress the semantically heavily loaded Arabic syllables into an English form that is not over-diffuse. But much more important than this is the character of the rhythms. Tuetey's cloyingly frequent anapaestic rhythms are characteristic of the English ballad metre, and produce an excess of unstressed syllables; whereas exactly the opposite is true of heroic metres (represented in the majority of the pieces in this collection) both in Arabic and in English; one will rarely encounter an anapaestic foot in Milton or in Pope's *Iliad*. All in all, it is probably better to ascribe any attempt at rhythmic uniformity in the English version, as is done here.

It must be said, however, that in rendering the shorter and less stately metres (of which there are a few examples given), Tuetey is rather more successful; also that the critical notes in the introduction are always interesting and usually justified.

Experts in Arabic poetry, and both teachers and students of Arabic, all of whom might be expected to have a keen interest in this work, are of course vitally concerned with the accuracy of the renderings, and even for the non-

expert, it does no good to the cause of Arabic poetry to present him with inaccurate renderings. Unfortunately, Tuetey has made the task of assessing his accuracy by comparison with the originals excessively difficult: out of nineteen source-books to which he gives references for his selection, only half-a-dozen are in modern critical editions customarily used by scholars; the rest are antiquated nineteenth-century editions, mostly uncritical, and invaluable except in two or three of the greatest libraries in this country. In these circumstances, to track down the Arabic of one of these pieces (not knowing even whether its first line is the first line of the original poem) would be a very time-consuming research project.

The most I can do here is to note three instances of shortcoming. In piece 10, the famous poem of Shanfara rhyming in the letter *l*, we are presented with the bizarre expression "fringed by cares", where the original says "acquainted with cares" echoing Isaiah's "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; it is certainly rash to think that one can improve on the Authorized Version of the Bible: a few lines later, the poet says that the Spirit of War has "rejoiced in him"; what can have induced Tuetey to transpose this into his "dear wife" and her "mirth with him"? The sentiment in Tuetey presents it is totally incongruous with the tone of the poem as a whole. Piece 136 is a short (but entire) epigram by Ma'arri, expressed in perfectly simple language with no rhetorical adornment apart from the epigrammatic point itself; it runs, "Often a singing girl in the house of a grasping wicked man (needless to say) decked out in bracelets and earrings may be made for her as adornment a golden snake. Tuetey's version runs, "The pleased exterior of a grasping wicked man (needless to say) and gems, desired in gold, a serpent's image to be made, but never thought of walking coldly fixed in her breast". Here, "gilt-edged" strikes a highly discordant note; and how can readers, who grasp, without a great deal of thought, that "walking cold" refers to reputation and judgment (a concept immediately translatable in the Arabic)?

## Subcontinental shelves

Jonathan Katz

STEVE ASHTON and PENELOPE TUSON  
India Office Library and Records: A brief guide for teachers  
73pp. British Library. £2.75.  
0 7123 0621 8

TIMOTHY N. THOMAS  
Indians Overseas: A guide to source materials in the India Office Records for the study of Indian emigration 1830-1950  
97pp. British Library. £12.95.  
0 7123 0043 0

GRAHAM SHAW and MARY LLOYD (Editors)  
Publications Proscribed by the Government of India: A catalogue  
203pp. British Library. £25.  
0 7123 0039 5

DIPALI GHOSH  
Translations of Bengali Works into English: A bibliography  
264pp. Mansell. £30.  
0 7201 1809 3

KATHERINE HENN  
Rabindranath Tagore: A bibliography  
331pp. Folkestone: Bailey Brothers and Swinfen for Scarecrow Press. £32.50.  
0 8108 1790 X

London's India Office Library and Records, now administratively a department of the British Library, possesses virtually unrivalled collections of printed and manuscript sources on South Asia, and now runs an education service to place its material, especially documents concerning the history of British India, at the disposal of teachers and students. Steve Ashton and Penelope Tuson's imaginatively written new guide for teachers, *India Office Library and Records*, should bring this part of the collections to wider public attention and use. As well as explaining the coverage of some of the constituent collections of papers and of the Records in general, the guide shows, with a few well-chosen examples of historical themes, how the great wealth of available primary documents can be used to assist the study of history even at school level.

In the treatment of several of these themes, such as the Amritsar massacre and the experiences of Indian soldiers in the First World War, one also sees a move towards objectivity as an educational aim. In colonial history this is clearly still needed as a corrective to defensive or conservative attitudes, and also to the glorification of various colours, that can become fashionable in post-colonial times. The "indenture system" is one of those themes that look fine, and some changes in perception, to enter the main purview of colonial historians in the West. From the 1830s, for almost a century after the abolition of slavery, plantations in numerous parts of the British Empire and in some French colonies were worked by labour-

ers who were recruited in India and persuaded to emigrate, often on exploitative contracts enforceable on pain of criminal liability. Those who survived their terms of employment and stayed on after the expiry of their contracts became the cores of Asian communities that have since attained economic and cultural importance in many independent countries. Hugh Tinker's important book *A New System of Slavery* (1974) showed among other things the dependence of Britain's imperial prosperity on the indentured labour of Indian workers, and can be said to have established the terms of reference for a whole state of more specialized studies in Indian emigration. Work in this field stands to be greatly assisted by Timothy N. Thomas's *Indians Overseas: A guide to source materials in the India Office Records for the study of Indian emigration 1830-1950*. Much of what he lists and describes was previously hard to track down; it includes collections of both official and private documents covering the history of indentures and related matters of colonial administration. This is followed by useful notes on relevant and important overseas archives. Thomas's introduction to this guide is a highly readable historical and bibliographical essay, which takes us vividly through the story of indentures, the debates and legislation aimed at curbing the most blatant malpractices (or at averting the most damaging criticisms), and the later history of Indian communities and their struggles for equitable treatment in increasingly hostile environments.

A Hindi drama on the evils of "twentieth century slavery" (indenture) appears among the many hundreds of publications banned by the Government of India during the first half of this century, but nevertheless acquired on the initiative of the British Museum and India Office Libraries, carefully stored and now described in a fascinating catalogue, *Publications Proscribed by the Government of India*, edited by Graham Shaw and Mary Lloyd. The number of proscribed books, pamphlets and ephemera in these collections is formidable, particularly as this is only a small part of the material banned through successive acts of press legislation since the first quarter of the nineteenth century. So far, surprisingly little account has been taken of these collections, and of similar and larger lots available in India and Pakistan, even after the appearance in 1974 of N. G. Barrier's *Banned: Controversial literature and political control in British India 1907-1947*. And yet it is an obviously promising field for studying the byways of the nationalist movements. In this new catalogue, the publications are meticulously listed under language, each entry carrying a brief but helpful description of content; thus the book can be read with profit, and sometimes amusement, even in isolation from the material it deals with. This material is an interesting mixture.

There are the obviously seditious kinds of publication violently inveighing against British rule. There are others which were perceived to raise the danger of intercommunal tension, or which advocated religious or sectarian conflict; but it is clear that calls to unity of the various groups were also carefully sifted. The expression of socialist sympathies was apparently considered to raise dangerous precedents; some titles, including several which were readily available outside India, have nothing directly to do with Indo-British relations but obviously disquieted the censors on more fundamental principles. Among the banned patriotic poems are many ballads (for example Marathi *powadas*) composed for oral transmission; historians of these and other genres will be indebted to the British censors, and of course to the present cataloguers, for preserving many transient gems; far more must have received unhelped performance by itinerant bards in the pay of political movements, and were then lost to posterity. The picture should be completed by Indian and Pakistani catalogues in their own countries, where much more of this material remains to be revived. In the Indian National Archives this has already been started with the reissuing of some proscribed literature. Meanwhile the British Library will be issuing its own valuable collections on microfilm.

Dipali Ghosh's bibliography, *Translations of Bengali Works into English*, is a worthwhile undertaking. It is to be expected that English-speakers will try to acquire some knowledge of the literature and culture of the Bengali population in Britain by using translations. Just over 700 works are listed, and though the cataloguing here is far from perfect a careful search through the book will turn up a good variety of texts worth reading. The very brief introduction could have been improved with more enlightening notes on Bengali literature, perhaps highlighting some of the works included in the catalogue.

Katherine Henn's much more ambitious bibliography, *Rabindranath Tagore*, extremely well done as far as it goes, is on the other hand devalued by its restriction to English-language sources; it rather underplays the fact that Tagore was a Bengali and was, as was often told, at his best in Bengali. The Nobel award for the English *Gitanjali* may have made him an honorary Westerner, but we should by now be acquiring an interest also in Tagore's output in his own language, or at least reading about it. The way is still open for the compilation of a critical, more selective work which may take account of Bengali criticism, and perhaps also studies in European languages. Most of the important sources are, after all, in the India Office and British Libraries. Dare we hope for a time when a teachers' guide to the marvellous Oriental collections and to works on *Indian* literature may be deemed marketable?

## Keys to holdings

Alan Bell

Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Houghton Library, Harvard University  
1995 the total of eight volumes (£1,450 with microfiche inventories).  
Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey.  
0 8587 0402 (the set)  
Index of Manuscripts in the British Library  
Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey. £1,200 the set of ten volumes.  
0 85964 140 6 (the set)

The Houghton Library's manuscript collections cover an enormous range both chronologically and territorially. There are important medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, modern East European political archives and American and English literary manuscripts that make the Houghton an essential place of inquiry for scholars from all over the world. For those visiting Cambridge, MA, there is an excellent card catalogue available to readers in the corridor linking the Houghton and Widener Libraries, and this vast index has always made a working trip to Houghton both pleasant and efficient.

Chadwyck-Healey have now added to their

growing ranks of reference works a reproduction in clear three-column layout of the whole set of 136,000 entries. Eight large volumes are scheduled for issue through 1986, and even from the first volume (of 464 pages), made available for review, it is possible to admire the consistency of descriptive technique that has been characteristic of Harvard practice from the start. The principles of compilation are easily described, and anyone using these volumes should give due attention to the four pages of introduction by Rodney Dennis, the present Curator of Manuscripts, which tell readers just what they ought to know. Readers are, however, notoriously negligent of prefatory notes to indexes, even though a little careful preparation may well enrich their work greatly. The same applies, particularly when indexes are as good as this one, to whatever descriptive listings are available; card entries too reveal a good deal, but they rarely tell the user as much as a well-devised catalogue description.

At Harvard the typescript inventories of the major collections have always been a particularly valuable adjunct of the card catalogue, and it is good to know that the Chadwyck-Healey publication includes the option of a set of 331 microfiches which reproduce all the

available lists. These will certainly be worth consulting to provide an archival context for whatever collection the individual catalogue entries have been drawn from, be it the correspondence of Charles Eliot Norton or the great autograph album of Frederick Locker-Lampson, to take two examples I have myself used in the Houghton Reading Room in the past.

The same publishers have now also completed the even longer task of issuing the *Index of Manuscripts in the British Library*. With a letter of Dr Ernst Zihlke to the Coptic scholar W. E. Crum, Volume Ten (despite eleven having been originally planned) brings the set to a conclusion. The task has been punctually finished, and even with its rather understated limitations the 6,000 four-columned pages cannot but be a major contribution to the study of the British Library's holdings. As D. G. Vaisey said of Volume One (*TLS*, January 25, 1985), this is "a marvellous key with which to unlock the British Library's great manuscript collections". As with the Harvard set, one is conscious throughout how much the catalogue entries, particularly for the later volumes of the *Catalogue of Additions*, will add to the basic information given in the very brief index entries.

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Jonathan Evan Maslow's *Bird of Life, Bird of Death: A naturalist's journey through a land of political turmoil*, which was reviewed by John A. C. Greppin in the *TLS* on August 15, is published in the UK by Viking at £10.95.